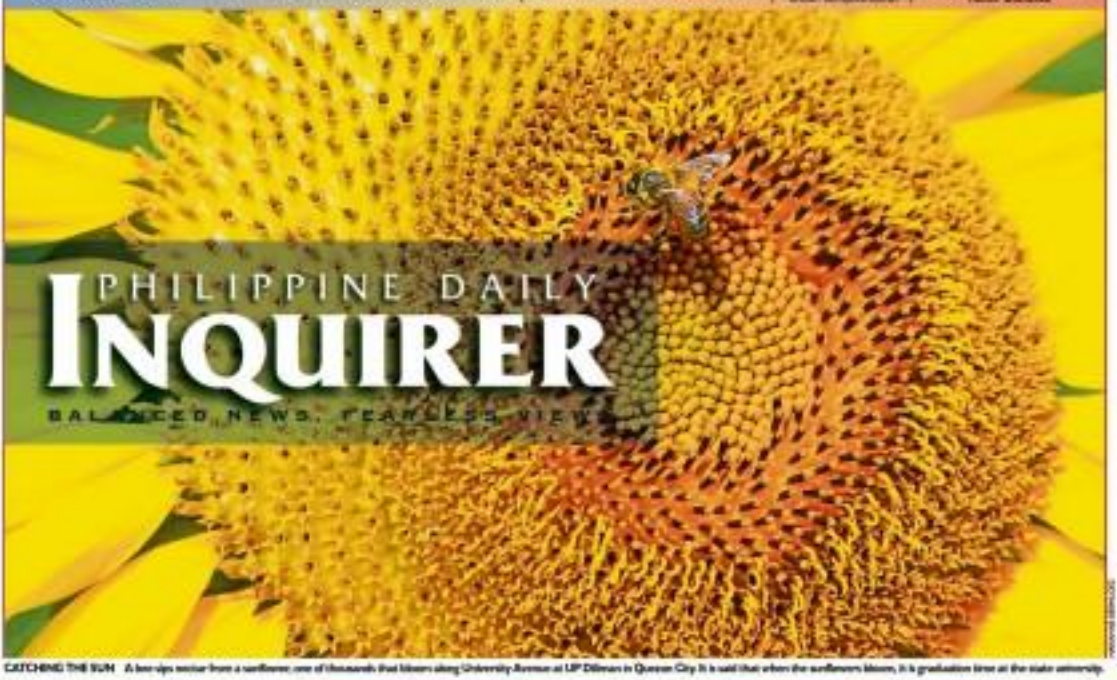
Saturday, April 14, 2012 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 27 / No. 126 P18 | Mobile Alerts: Text INQ DN BREAKING to 4407 | www.inquirer.net Twitter: @inquirerdotnet

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



CATCHING THE SUN A bee sips nectar from a sunflower, one of thousands that bloom along University Avenue at UP Diliman in Quezon City. It is said that when the sunflowers bloom, it is graduation time at the state university.

Cheap power in South over

SAYING JESSICA "American Idol" judges Randy Jackson, Steven Tyler, Jennifer Lopez and host Ryan Seacrest storm the stage to "save" Fil-Am candidate Jessica Sanchez (left).

'Idol' judges 'save' Jessica, chide America

NEW YORK—Filipino-Mexican Jessica Sanchez, one of the strongest contenders on "American Idol" season 11, was dramatically saved from elimination by the show's judges on Thursday (Friday in Manila) as she was performing one last song to ...

BIG/A15

Netizens abuzz over elimination and rescue of Jessica

• **Another Fil-Am almost got the boot in 'The Voice'** / A15

But Mindanao rejects sale of hydro plants

By Norman Bordadora

DAVAO CITY—The era of cheap electricity in Mindanao is coming to an end, President Aquino said yesterday as he launched into an impassioned defense of the government's attempts to rationalize the power situation in the island at the Mindanao Power Summit that was called to discuss solutions to the supply shortfall that has brought rotating power blackouts the past few months.

Mr. Aquino faced a phalanx of politicians, business people and civil society groups who were all but united in their opposition to the impending privatization of the island's hydropower plants and demanding the revision of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira).

They also opposed the proposed power interconnection between Mindanao and Leyte province, saying it will only bring the high cost of power in the Visayas and Luzon to Mindanao.

"This isn't just about energy, this

CHEAP A6

Exemption from Epira blamed for power crisis / A6

PAYING ATTENTION BECOMES ELECTRIC President Aquino leans forward to better hear the PowerPoint presentation Friday in Davao City.

DAY OF RECKONING for Ecleo

Court finds Rep. Ecleo guilty of killing wife

By Charlose Ursal
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—Ten years after his wife's body was found inside a black garbage bag dumped in a ravine, Rep. Ruben Ecleo Jr. of Dinagat Island was found guilty of homicide and sentenced to reclusion perpetua, or at least 30 years' imprisonment.

Ecleo, who was not present during the reading of the verdict, was found guilty of killing his wife Alona Bacolod-Ecleo inside their home in Cebu City in 2003. Aside from a life sen...

COURT A13

North Korea rocket launch a crashing humiliation

PYONGYANG, North Korea—North Korea's widely condemned rocket splintered into pieces over the Yellow Sea soon after takeoff on Friday, an embarrassing end to a launch that the hermit state had infused with national pride and a blow for its new young leader, who faces international outrage over the attempt.

Within minutes of the early morning launch, the United States and South Korea declared it a failure. North Korea acknowledged that hours later in an announcement broadcast on state TV, saying the satellite that the rocket was carrying had been unable to enter into orbit.

World leaders were swift to

NORTH A8

PH, China set aside protests to ease tensions

By Tina G. Santos

THE PHILIPPINES and China agreed yesterday to set aside their diplomatic protests in order to ease tensions over a naval standoff at the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

China also pulled back one of three surveillance ships at the Scarborough Shoal off the northwestern Philippines, Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario told reporters. But the expanse remained with two other Chinese ships facing off a Philippine Coast Guard vessel.

Three of eight Chinese fishing boats at the center of the standoff may have left the shoal yesterday.

Setting aside the protests, however, did not mean withdrawing them. Del Rosario said the protests would still be coming, but the two sides would not give primary attention to them, as both wanted to break the standoff by diplomatic means.

Del Rosario, who met with Chinese Ambassador Ma Keqing yesterday morning, said the Philippines and China agreed to maintain the "status

PH, CHINA A2

All in the family at Senate: Enriles, Angaras, etc.

By Christian V. Esguerra

ALL in the family.

That's how the Senate is shaping up, with some of the country's most influential political clans fielding other family members in the 2013 midterm elections.

The 16th Congress, which holds office from 2013 to 2016, might end up with at least two pairs of siblings and a father-and-son tandem, given the names of prospective candidates being floated so far.

The senatorial lineup of the United Nationalist...

ALL IN A13

NEWS

Pacquiao joining Binay coalition / A2

Ati tribe threatens to occupy disputed Boracay land / A5

WORLD

British PM makes historic visit to Burma / A22

BUSINESS

ABS-CBN net profit down 24% to P2.4B in 2011 / B2

Gov't debt rose to P4.99T in Jan. / B1

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Second FRONTPAGE

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PEGMAJOTO/6/45

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P13,709,736.80

LOTTO 6/42 | LOTTO 6/49 | LOTTO 6/55 | 3D Straight

Pacquiao joining Binay party

By Norman Bordadora

DAGUPAN CITY—Is Sarangani Rep. Manny Pacquiao joining Vice President Jejomar Binay's PDP-Laban party?

If you ask the boxer, the answer is yes. But if you ask the right chief, there wouldn't be any champion, it's not a settled matter.

"It's confirmed," Binay said in an interview with Solar TV at the Binay Aquino International dry port yesterday. "He (Pacquiao) approached me and told me that he wanted to join PDP-Laban."

Binay said Pacquiao told him about his plan to join the party last month, during the Philippine Sportswriters Association dinner's night.

Sen. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, PDP-Laban president, also confirmed that Pacquiao was joining the party. "It's confirmed that he's joining PDP-Laban," Pimentel said in a text message to the Inquirer. "There's already a meeting of the minds. What's missing only is the oath-taking."

Talking to reporters yesterday on the sidelines of the energy summit called here by President Aquino, Pacquiao indicated an intention to join PDP-Laban, but he needs to clear that he was not yet a member of the party.

"(Binay and I) are only done that's why people are thinking that I'm already PDP-Laban. But I have yet to take oath," Pacquiao said.

"(But if he is willing to take the oath, why not? We support all good achievers," he said.

In another interview in the same venue, Pacquiao, the most recent accomplishment target of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) in the Aquino government's efforts to raise more tax revenues, said Binay's group found him acceptable.

"(I'm acceptable to them), that I have yet to take my oath," Pacquiao said.

Pacquiao won his congressional seat in 2010 as a member of the Nacionalista Party, headed by Sen. Manuel Villar. Villar was the 2010 standard-bearer, who topped the Senate race. Sen. Gregorio Ejercito Aquino III became the Liberal Party's (LP) presidential candidate.

After the election, Pacquiao met with Mr. Aquino at the president-elect's Times Street residence to say he would support the new administration.

Pacquiao has remained with the NP but is part of the LP-led coalition in the House of Representatives.

But the BIR's going after him for alleged failure to submit tax records and endorsement issues he or, view may have driven him to jump to the other side of the fence.

The BIR owners claim that he wasn't given due process before the filing of the case as he didn't have the opportunity to answer the allegations against him.

Pacquiao asked the BIR to ask its regional director in August 11, as the case that was brought against him had been his opponents, and his business as a product endorser. He claimed he was losing endorsement deals abroad because of the charges.

Binay's PDP-Laban party recently formed the United Nationalist Alliance (UNA) with the Partido ng Mamamayang Pilipino and Democracy in the 2013 elections, former President Joseph Estrada.

Aside from allies of President Aquino who are not members of the ruling Liberal coalition is also looking to get former allies of Mr. Aquino as senatorial candidates in next year's midterm elections. These include former Sen. Ernesto Maceda and Juan Ponce Enrile.

Local alliances

In Puerto Princesa City yesterday, Binay formed an alliance to build up UNA by forging alliances with local political power blocs throughout the country. He aims to dispel rumors, however, that he was steering away from the administration to prepare for the midterm elections.

"(The coming election, local political groups will prevail. It's like a lock-and-key-type situation in which the influence of national parties on the outcome of the local elections will be almost nil," Binay said.

Binay, the Aquino administration's bookkeeping czar, was in Puerto Princesa to chair those becoming the re-beneficiaries of the national government's housing program.

The Binay acknowledged that UNA's taking in key allies of the Aquino administration has fueled speculations that PDP-Laban will soon break away from the Aquino administration.

"Our being opposition should be regarded in the spirit of what prevails in the democratic system. We are for constructive opposition. If there is no constructive opposition, we don't have a democracy," Binay said.

He brushed aside criticisms that administration stalwarts of his acceptance of allies of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in UNA.

"They are people who have qualifications," Binay said, referring to Arroyo's allies. "Isn't this what? Let's give opposition' allies' no definition," he added.

He said PDP-Laban was in discussions with groups and individuals "who approach us to join us."

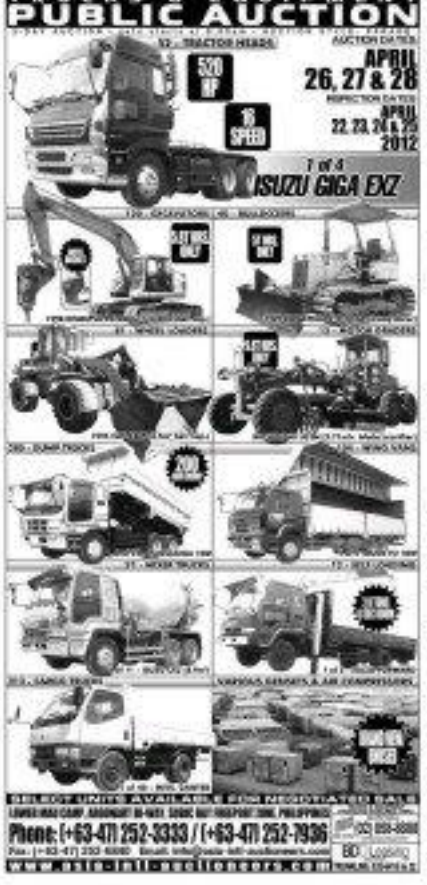
Binay was accompanied by Puerto Princesa by Magsaysay and PDP-Laban secretary-general Atty. Art Samaniego.

Reacting to criticisms raised against his joining UNA, Magsaysay lashed back at members of the Liberal Party who she claimed were also former supporters of Arroyo.

"Who were those criticizing me? They were also allies of the former President Arroyo," Magsaysay said. "(They were also our coalition partners who were with the majority allied with GMA. Most were LP members who also came from Lakas-Kampi. We only differ in that we did not change parties."

She added, "I joined UNA because we have similar advocacies."

She added, "If joined UNA because we have a similar vision of what we want for our country. That also shows that (Binay) could be the leading leader of the country." With reports from Sarangani Andy, Inquirer Southern Luzon, Visa Santos and Christian Esguerra



Guam exec's remarks irk PH consulate

HAGATÑA, Guam—The Filipino "brigade is not good enough," according to a senior official at the Attorney General's Office here in an anonymous YouTube video circulating here.

The official, who is the subject of an ethics complaint that the Philippine Consulate General in Guam is preparing to file with the Guam Bar Association,

For controversial comment was made by Assistant Attorney General Benjamin Abreon reportedly during the Guam Board of Allied Health meeting, where members discussed a proposal to outsource a transcription task to a transcriber in the Philippines.

"I don't like the idea at all," Abreon told the board. "Their English is not good enough. We're dealing with a third world country where English is a second language and we're dealing with tapes that are not crystal clear."

The sentiment video clip, posted on Youtube was e-mailed to the media and local senators by a doctor, who has left Guam.

At the board meeting, Abreon reportedly objected to the transcription outsourcing in the Philippines, saying, "We're dealing with a transcriber who may or may not know anything about legal proceedings and certainly can't pick up the inflections of inflection so as to what they might have said."

After receiving a copy of the video clip, Philippine consul Bryan Mangaliit met with Attorney General Larry Sagonda and conveyed the consulate general's concerns over the "racially-discriminating remarks."

Mar-Vic Cagurangan, Contributor

Leila denies pressuring Comelec on 2 accused

By Jerome Aning

JUSTICE SECRETARY Leila de Lima yesterday denied pressuring the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to admit two former election supervisors as state witnesses in the pending poll-sabotage case against former Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.

"Whether it's not right to accuse me of meddling in this issue. Of course, I am meddling, the Department of Justice can meddle because we're part of the prosecution team. We're investing in the prosecution, and therefore, we have a stake. It can't be that we'll just keep silent. We have to say what we think is the right strategy," De Lima told reporters.

On Thursday, Abalos' former lawyer, Regalo Estley, claimed he "felt" that pressure was being exerted by the DOJ on the Comelec to drop the charges against former provincial election supervisors Lilian Hofileña of South Cotabato and Sagie Tiamzon of North Cotabato.

Important testimonies

De Lima, however, said the testimonies of Rudam and Montaner were important because without them, the charges against Abalos would not prosper.

"If the testimonies of Rudam and Montaner on the irregularities are not presented, do you think we can successfully prosecute Chairman Abalos? They're the ones logging Chairman Abalos. I don't know of anyone else who is pointing at him," she said.

Charges of electoral sabotage were filed against Rudam and Marbietze during the term of Abalos. The two were accused of manipulating with the results of the 2007 senatorial elections in the Cotabato provinces. The case against Rudam was filed at the Pasay City regional trial court during the term of Abalos' successor, Jose Melo.

The two were set to testify but one faced last year at the DOJ and pointed to Abalos as the mastermind of the poll-cheating operations. Abalos was then included in the case.

Separate case

A separate election-related case was also lodged by Comelec against Abalos, former Maguindanao provincial election supervisor Lintang Bedol, former Gen. Teddy Sinforoso and former Nombaki Ghaia Macapaal-Asiya in connection with the alleged tampering of the results of the 2007 senatorial elections in Maguindanao.

In the Maguindanao case, Bedol claimed Abalos had also instructed him to rig the results, while another witness, Hawie Unas, claimed to have overheard Asiya's telling Sinforoso to ensure that the administration senatorial slate would have a clean sweep in the province.

The Cotabato and Maguindanao cases are being pursued by a joint Comelec-DOJ prosecution panel.

De Lima said she had already spoken to Comelec Chair Sixto Brillantes Jr. and reiterated the DOJ's recommendation to make Rudam and Marbietze state witnesses, which, if the court allows, would mean the withdrawal of the charges of electoral sabotage against them.

"It is a little down to a choice between the biggest fish who is the former chair Abalos or these two accessory who, admittedly participated in the cheating. They're not denying it. That's why they are concerned because they are participants. They were incriminated in the conspiracy," she said.

She said Brillantes told her he would relay her concerns to other Comelec commissioners. De Lima said she and Brillantes would serve next week.

Judgment call

De Lima said allowing Marbietze and Rudam to turn state witness was "judgment call" on the part of the Comelec and DOJ.

"It's a difficult judgment to make but under the circumstances, under the premises, it's the opinion of the DOJ that we have to go after Chairman Abalos. Are we going to allow him to pass bail and evade, be acquitted, in spite of the story of the two (Rudam and Marbietze) that is very clear?" she asked.

Two senior Comelec officials, who declined to be identified, separately admitted that the poll body did take a long time deciding on the fate of Marbietze and Rudam.

One said the Comelec-DOJ panel tried but failed to convince prosecutor witnesses, including a former Comelec commissioner, to testify against Abalos and even tag Asiya as also the mastermind in the Cotabato cheating.

"Without new witnesses, not only Rudam and Marbietze but even Bedol and Unas would have to be state witnesses as they can pin their superiors and other higher officials," he said.

The other said the Comelec-DOJ panel wanted the election-related cases against Abalos and Asiya to be "strong enough" so that Asiya's opponents in the Comelec—who compose the majority in the poll body—would not days vote it down.

DENR, tourism council seek more no-mining zones

By Kristine L. Alave

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the National Tourism Council last week endorsed proposals to delineate hundreds of areas as "no-mining zones."

According to Environment Secretary Ramon Paje, the DENR has recommended that the government add nine more sites to its current list of 109 protected areas. Of those already on the list, 178 of them would be further declared as "eco-tourism zones," to expand their protection from mineral extraction activities, including small-scale mining.

The nine new areas to be placed under the conservation area status are: Bolinao-Bolinao National Park in the Cordillera Region; Zambales Mountains in Region 1 and 3; Mts. Irid Siapelo and Bilatong in Region 4A; Dalton Group of Islands, also in Region 4A; Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park in Region 4B; Mag-as Lamboy in Region 7; Mt. Hamut-Hamut in Region 8; Mt. Dilong-Dilong in Region 11; and Bangan-Pesik in Tawi-tawi Island.

On strengthening restrictions in 178 protected areas, Paje said: "The priority land use in these areas is tourism," Paje said. "We have agreed that these areas are no mining zones," Paje added.

'In conflict'

He said government is supportive of the idea since it wants to bolster the country's tourism industry. A few months ago, the Department of Tourism launched a campaign with a tag line "It's More Fun in the Philippines" to widen more foreign tourists to come to the country.

The move to delineate more protected areas came after DENR, Hillsman University and the German aid agency noted that the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act of 1992 has loopholes that allow some extractive and commercial activities in certain protected areas.

Also, the review noted that current laws on protected areas and the Mining Act of 1995 are "in conflict" when it comes to areas that are open to mining and areas with a protected status.

The Nipas law also mandates Congress to declare a particular area as a protected site, which is an expensive and long process.

RESCUED FROM PIRATES

Glad to be home, sad for 2 who didn't make it

By Tina D. Santos

THE BEATTY Filipino seamen who were taken captive by Somali pirates were glad to be home, but sad that two of their companions did not make it.

"I'm so happy I'm finally home, but I'm also sad because we lost two of our colleagues," an emotional Wilmore Roque Jr. told reporters on his arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Nia) Terminal 1 Wednesday night.

Elmer Monreal and Stephen Barbarona died during a rescue mission launched by the Iranian Navy on April 2 to save the crew of the Iranian vessel, Captain Bagheri Jr. told reporters on his arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Nia) Terminal 1 Wednesday night.

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The rescue operation lasted two days and ended with the arrest of 12 pirates.

Monreal, 33, a native of Masbate, Quezon, was key in the thwarting a bullet fired by the remaining pirates. Barbarona, 33, of Asingan, Pangasinan, suffocated in heavy smoke in the vessel's engine room, where he had sought the gun's safety.

18 Pinoys

The Iglesias had a crew of 22, of mixed nationalities. Two of them were Filipinos.

According to Roque, Barbarona was very close to him, as Barbarona was the godfather of his 2-year-old daughter, Princess.

"Like all of us, he must have been very scared, that's why he went to the engine room to hide. But at that time, that area had already been searched by the," a teary-eyed Roque said. "I really thought we would all die there, so I just prayed and surrendered my fate to God," he said, holding the hand of his wife, Arcelie.

Napoleon Flores, a seaman for 20 years and has sailed to many parts of the world, said he was simply glad that he was reunited with his family.

"I have gone on long journeys before, but this time coming home is really different," Flores said. "I have mixed emotions, but certainly very grateful to be alive."

Recounting his ordeal, Flores said the pirates knew about the Iranian Navy's plan to stage the rescue.

He said the pirates boarded their and used them as human shields during the fire fight with the Iranian commandos.

"We were taken hostage. We were held in one area and the pirates stuck to wherever we refused to obey their orders," Flores said. The pirates, he added, also ransacked the vessel's cabins.

Scary

"I thought we would all die there," he said. "What was scary was simply being there...it was really hard. And what made it harder was the fact that we lost two of our colleagues."

Asked if they would still consider working as seafarers, most of the seamen said that while economic opportunities overseas were luring, they would now think twice before taking on new assignments.

Their families shared their view.

"Life is more important. Money can be easily earned," said Anna Alave, mother of seaman Rolando Alave Jr., 26. "Maybe I would just ask him to look for a job here."

The other survivors of the hijacking who returned home on Wednesday were Reymarc Lumaad, Glendale Amoloni III, Benel Fuchico, Arnold Hugo and Ronnie Ilagan.

Meanwhile, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) said the families of Monreal and Barbarona would receive P200,000 in death and burial assistance. Their wives can avail themselves of Owwa's livelihood programs and their children, of educational assistance from the agency.

Republic of the Philippines
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BID BULLETIN NO. 1

March 26, 2012

The deadline for the issuance of Sales Documents and submission of Eligibility Requirements and Financial Proposals for the negotiated sale of the following HGC acquired properties are hereby rescheduled on the following dates:

Activities	Legacy Memorial Estate (LME)	Paco Mall (Land)	Margarita Plaza Condominium	Margarita Eastville
Issuance of Sales Documents	April 27, 2012 (Friday)			
Submission of Eligibility Requirements and Financial Proposals / Offers	May 2, 2012 (Wednesday)			
	10:00 a.m.	1:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	
Submission of deficiencies / lacking documents	May 3, 2012 (Thursday) – 5:00 p.m.			

(sgd.) CORAZON G. CORPUZ
Acting Executive Vice President

Appointment of Morong 43 tormentor hit

By TJ Burgonio

THE LAWYERS of "Morong 43" yesterday branded as criminal promotion Presidente Aquino's appointment of Maj. Gen. Jorge Segovia as commander of the Eastern Mindanao Command based in Davao City.

"P-Noy's (senior) move indubitably insults and spits on the still fresh wounds of the victims who were illegally arrested, detained and tortured by the (former) underling (Segovia's) command," said Edre Olalia, secretary-general of the National Union of People's Lawyers that represented the Morong 43.

Olalia said Segovia headed the 2nd Infantry Division that seized the 43 health workers in February 2010 from a resort in Morong, Bataan on suspicion that they were subversives and rebels, and had "feverishly" defended the actions of his men.

The health workers were eventually freed after 204 days.

Segovia's designation as Eastern Mindanao commander would lead to his promotion to lieutenant general.

Segovia is a member of the Philippine Military Academy's Magsaysay Class of 1980, which has adopted Mr. Aquino's four sisters, Pinky Pepsi, Viel and Kris, Olalia said.

"This utter insensitivity of the administration to the grievances of the Morong 43 victims amounts to a whole tirade about the attitude of P-Noy with respect to upholding human rights—indifferent, benighted and complacent," he said.

Olalia said Segovia's promotion only showed that no officer responsible for rights violations was "not only left to wander at will but rewarded with undeserved professional advancement."

"Practically nothing has changed and the system that bred impunity during the former regime is still in place. Years from now, when another Palpatus would rear its ugly head and become almost unbelievable, we will not relish saying, 'we told you so,'" Olalia said of fugitive retired Gen. Jovito Palparan, who has dodged arrest warrants issued by the 2006 disappearance of two state activists in students.

Tribe threatens to occupy disputed Boracay land

By TJ Burgonio

IT'S NOT only the best (but chilling in Boracay is a land dispute between the indigenous people of Malay and some businessmen is about to feed over.

Members of the Ati tribe are now threatening to occupy the two-hectare beach property awarded to them, even without a government order installing them on the land, to protect it from further development by the elite or rich claimants.

"We're following the due process. And yet this due process is giving undue advantage to the rich claimants who continue to build structures. *We might end up without a land of our own*," Delfin Justo, chairman of the Boracay Ati Tribal Organization, said in an interview.

The tribespeople are facing against time to get hold of the property located in Barangay Manoc-Manoc on the southern tip of the 1,032-hectare island resort before it's allegedly grabbed by the structures put up by the owners, Tamson and Lobo families.

The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) is set to issue a resolution to finally settle the dispute in a few days, but the mood for immediately unfavorable. The other claimants can still appeal within 15 days after receiving the order.

A lot of things could happen in 15 days, and if the order is unfavorable to them, the other claimants could bring the case to the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court. By the time it's finally resolved, there would be nothing left of the property the tribe said.

Resident opinion seem s to occupy the property and protect it, they said.

Mountain: President Aquino should follow up on the NCIP's award of the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title given to the tribe in January 2011, and take up their case, said Justo, who traveled to Manila in the hope of getting the installation order from the NCIP.

Justo, together with four other tribe members, Jo Gerrano Satanir and Jose Antonio Medilo, was told by the NCIP en banc on Friday morning that the resolution must be issued until next week, but the court for reasons able until after the other claimants had been interviewed on it.

The other claimants had filed motions contesting the title issued to the Ati with the NCIP and the regional trial court in Kalibo, drawing details of sale as proof of their ownership of the property. With the case still unresolved, the tribe are staying in a one-hectare property that is al, as being claimed by politicians in Caja-building.

Anthropologists said the Ati had inhabited the island long before the earliest Filipino migrants came. By the 1970s, tourists began streaming into the island, lured by its crystalline white sand beaches and expansive waters.

BORACAY: Trouble in paradise

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We are now accepting applicants for Academic Year 2012-2013.

Marius Panuncialman; 68

FORMER news man Marius N. Panuncialman died Thursday, April 12, in his residence, at Bagumbong, Caloocan. He is survived by his wife, the former Belinda Reyes; children Alvin and Ingrid, Dr. Alejandro, Ellen Joelle and Belinda Jane; grandchild—Amanda Ina; and siblings Nestoria Reyes, Marian Rizza Perez and Dr. Gregorio Panuncialman.

He worked in various newspapers, including the Philippine Daily Inquirer, The Manila Bulletin, Manila Standard, Malaya, and Tempo during his more than 30 years as a media man.

His remains lie at The Divine of St. Therese—Blessed Little Gerrie Chapel (basement to Newport Boulevard, Newport World, Pasay City. Viewing starts today at 3 p.m.

Interments will be on the afternoon of April 17. Viewing at the Centennial Gardens II, National Road, Barangay Habalang, San Pablo, Laguna.

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Exemption from Epira blamed for power crisis

By Amy R. Remo

THE EXEMPTION of Mindanao's biggest hydropower complex from being privatized is considered by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira) to be partly to blame for the worsening power supply problem on the island.

The continued presence of the government through the NEA-supported Agus-Pulangi hydropower complex in Mindanao has kept electricity rates on the island to low—at P2.93 per kilowatt-hour at present—that it has deterred investors from investing and pulling up the critical power infrastructure, said Energy Secretary Jose Rene D. Almendras in a recent briefing with business executives, columnists and editors.

Almendras clarified that the intention of the Epira was good and correct.

"In Australia and all over the world, [this model] is working. Our problem was it took us too long—the implementation of the Epira was delayed. Also, those were leaders [but were] worried that rates supposed to be subsidized overnight [earlier, which] became politicized," he said.

"Was the law faulty? No, it was correct. It's just that the way we implemented it could have been a lot better," he said.

It did not help, too, that the previous Arroyo administration did not allow the state power firm National Power Corp. (Napocor), to raise electricity rates in Mindanao to reflect the true cost of electricity—one of the reasons why the agency incurred billions of dollars in debt, or it had to subsidize and operate at a loss, according to Almendras.

Price challenge

"It is difficult for any investor to put up a coal-fired power plant. They are scared to do so, because who will buy from them if their generation will cost more than the power generated from a hydro plant? There is a price challenge in Mindanao," he said.

Without the much-needed investments, Mindanao continues to rely heavily on the hydropower plants, which provide around 40 percent of the island's total power generation.

That made Mindanao's power supply vulnerable to drought, climate change or any drastic change in total hydrology.

The Epira (Republic Act No. 9136) was aimed at ensuring the country's power supply and reducing the cost of electricity. It was intended to turn the government from the burden of funding capital-intensive power projects, and allow instead for private sector to put up those crucial projects.

Then, the law directed the government to privatize or sell its power generation assets and the transmission it conducted with the independent power producers (IPPs). But for the last 10 years of the Epira's enforcement, Mindanao's Agus-Pulangi hydropower complex was exempted from such coverage.

The Epira provided that the ownership of the Agus and Pulangi power complexes was to be transferred to the Power Investment Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PIALMC), the state agency that was created to handle the privatization of Napocor's assets, but that both would continue to be operated by Napocor.

The privatization of the Agus and Pulangi complexes was to be left to the discretion of PIALMC in consultation with Congress, the law provided.

Unresolved

The decision on whether or not the complex should be offered to the private sector remains unresolved in the Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC), but will soon be submitted.

Early this year, Almendras urged the JCPC to issue within 2012 its decision on the sale of the Agus-Pulangi complex so that the Department of Energy "can finally move on."

He said that whether or not the JCPC decides to privatize the facilities, the DOE has proposals that could remove the incentive for the productivity of the biggest hydropower complex in Mindanao.

"People are saying that it was wrong to privatize [the state-owned power assets]. But if you look at the capacities of the privatized [power] facilities, they're already close to their installed capacities," Almendras said.

To date, PIALM has been able to sell power plants that can generate a total of 6,131.31 MW, equivalent to 79.16 percent participation capacity. The Napocor generation also able to append IPP administrators for its contracted capacities, representing 76.08 percent privatization level.

Deteriorating

By contrast, the Agus-Pulangi complex has continued to deteriorate, with its facilities now generating only 646 MW, compared with an installed capacity of 982 MW.

"I'm not saying it's good to privatize or not privatize. I think there should be some portion of generation that the government can keep for security purposes," Almendras said.

POWER DAMSE. 304, owned off Buhangin Brgy, Davao City, supplies electricity to Davao Light and Power Co.

Cheap power era over; Mindanao opposes sale of hydro plants

From page A1

a deal affecting investment and creating jobs, and this is about securing the future of this region. The decision is clear, by the state [that] from [in] 2013, the energy situation will be case less energy in the minds of Mindanaoans and investors in Mindanao alike—that by then, I can truthfully say that I left you in good hands," he told the assembled reporters.

The Petersons said the private sector investments and participation can guarantee a steady and sustainable power supply for Mindanao.

Things have changed

Mr. Aquino noted that Mindanao was able to get an exemption from the implementation of the Epira, the 2001 law that liberalized the power sector and set privatization as a means by breaking up the state generation monopoly and encouraging new subsidies to make the price of electricity to a non-market value.

"There was an oversupply of your power, more than adequate for your needs and cheaper than the power that anyone else had," he said.

The status quo could well have been maintained, if things had not changed, the President said.

"But things have changed. Increasing population means increasing demand, increasing opportunities for economic growth call for more power," Mr. Aquino said.

Mindanao's reliance on hydroelectric power is no longer sustainable, the President said.

"Hydropower needs water. And the availability and timeliness of the supply of water cannot be considered a constant. In the olden days to the demand is constant, but the supply not," he said.

If Mindanao can no longer rely on hydropower for much to provide for its base load, it would need to look for other sources of energy, he said.

"Essentially, Mindanao relying on hydropower for more than half of its committed consumption—what is called the base load—is not sustainable anymore. You have drought, you have [the] rainfall, to natural calamities, even to external [calamities] like El Niño," he said.

Eliminating inefficiencies

Mr. Aquino stressed of most inefficiencies in power generation is the refund if it continues to be exempted from the privatization provisions of the Epira.

Mr. Aquino said that the involvement the Epira was to relieve the DOE's burden of the state generation, National Power Corp. (Napocor), through the sale of its power plants to private investors. Napocor's debt had resulted as high as P1.24 trillion in 2003, he said.

"I did not come here to lie to you. Lies are keep on debasing the effects of Epira on the plants in Mindanao? Perhaps that would be possible, but a that the long-term solutions? The inefficiencies will continue," he said.

He said if the power situation in Mindanao was akin to that of a business entity that, if it seem to make a profit, has to compete in the market and has to be the most efficient.

"Those inefficiencies redound to our benefit. But if we keep on not attending to competitiveness or building that competitive market, then we will have the same situation," he said.

With continued inefficiencies, funding for power generation would continue to be uncertain, he said.

The government can no longer afford paying for power plants and at the same time pay for Napocor's debts.

"If one P1.8 billion budget, economics that cuts P600 billion is programmable. It's an government use for new classes, plus old loans, and still provide the services and facilities you need?" he asked.

"We have to get more plants here ... But how can you entice anyone to invest if their generating cost is more than their selling cost?" he said.

Economics not politics

"The simple truth is: your will have to pay more," the President said.

Consumers in Mindanao will have to pay more "because this is the reality of economics, not the domain of politics," he said.

"Everything has its price. If we have to pay a steep price for a total service. There are only two choices: pay a little more for energy, or live with the existing brownouts ... You have to pay a little more for the current and future health of the energy sector in Mindanao," the President said.

Paying a little more for energy will enable Mindanao to have a stable supply of power for the future of the region, the President said.

"It will make the lives of everyone in Mindanao better—not just by allowing them to switch on light bulbs—but also because having a more consistent energy source will give Mindanao a more welcoming business proposition to potential investors—not just in the energy sector," he said.

The President said it was not true, as some quarters have claimed, that Mindanao residents will have to pay up to P34 more per kilowatt-hour for their electricity bills could rise more than 40 billion Visayas and Luzon.

"We will have to contribute"

"This is simply not true. But, still, prices will increase; and you need to play your part. We all have to contribute," he said.

The government would do its part, he said, by setting aside P2.6 billion in the Department of Rehabilitation of the Agus-Pulangi hydroelectric plant and P7.2 billion for the rehabilitation of river basins to get the water flowing again for the hydropower plants.

The government is also looking into the formation of a Mindanao Power Monitoring Committee that will make sure the power rates are reasonable.

The committee will be chaired by the Mindanao Development Authority and its members will come from the Department of Energy, National Power Corp., the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines, civil society, electric cooperatives and the business sector.

Maximizing capacity

The President said Mindanao's energy production capacity now stands at 1,200 megawatts, including the 200 MW from the barges, "which I must thank their cooperation for continuing."

The Department of Energy last week ordered the electric cooperatives in Mindanao to buy additional power from the diesel-fueled power barges in the face of the reduced supply from their customary and cheaper hydroelectric sources. They initially refused to do so but have blamed for the existing power blackouts.

The island's peak demand is at 1,200 MW, "so you need 20 MW more to meet peak demand. That can also have to meet the reserve margin of 250 MW," Mr. Aquino said.

"So what this really means is we need 170 MW more," he said.

Mr. Aquino said repealing the Wakas 4 coal-powered plant will give Mindanao an additional 100 MW and listen to a further 70 MW that can be run by embedded generation units.

"I ask you to stay these units. And what the cooperatives have to do is contract these embedded generation units and apportion the 74 MW equitably among themselves. So we can reach our target of 1,400 MW and end up with an excess of 4 MW," he said.

"In other words, we are losing the problem now by maintaining capacity first then it not the end of the solution," he said, noting that the 4 MW surplus is "very thin."

"If any one of your power plants malfunctions, then the problem returns. Maximize [more] power generating capacity, and reduce it pressing all the red [to be banked]," he said.

Governors vs Epira

Eighteen out of 26 Mindanao governors showed up at the meeting summit that was held at Davao Insular Hotel.

Lanao del Norte Gov. Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo told reporters the Mindanao governors and executive passed a resolution supporting the proposed privatization of the Agus and Pulangi hydropower plants.

The governors also reached a consensual about seeking transfer of the Epira law, which they called on Mr. Aquino to consider to pursue Congress.

"Epira has not worked for the island of Mindanao after 11 years of implementation," said Environment Secretary Gov. Rodolfo del Rosario, speaking for the Confederation of Provincial Governors, City Mayors and Municipal Mayors League Presidents of Mindanao (Confed-Mindanao).

Arrangued, Gov. Miguel Dominguez believes the longterm solution to the power problems in Mindanao is to maximize Napocor's state control of the hydropower plants.

This comes responding the privatization of Napocor's assets—that is, the hydropower plants and power barges—so the Epira law has mandated, and

POLICE move to disperse protesters holding a rally in front of Waterfront Hotel in Davao City, where the Mindanao Power Summit is being held. The protesters oppose the building of coal-fired plants and the privatization of the hydropower plants that provide cheap power to Mindanao consumers.

inviting investors to pour capital into the power generation sector, Dominguez said.

"Do not privatize the hydro, there is no need to do so, the national government will need those hydro plants to continue its [energy] program which will create a more competitive energy mix for Mindanao," said Nicky Juliano, vice president for Mindanao of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), which has 12 chapters affiliates with some 4,000 business members in Mindanao.

Businesses affected

Businessmen said the power situation had adversely affected their businesses.

Iligan Rep. Frederick Siao, president of the Zamboanga City Chamber of Commerce, said in January 2011, the Mindpro Mall, which he manages, spent only P100,000 for operating costs.

"Now, for the same month this year, we waited to fill almost to P500,000. This does not include operating costs to fire up our gensets, repairs for machines and equipment as the waste and increase in fuel prices," he said.

Zamboanga City representative Erlind of five hours of additional brownouts daily.

Pillbox Lim, chief executive officer and president of Mega Prime Formula Inc., said Mindanao power threatens to halt damaged their machines, resulting in low productivity.

Lim said his company had resorted to blackouts because of the unreliability of consumer and power. "Our sales are affected by this and affected by the power shortage."

Disrupted at P-Noy

Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño, who attended the summit, was dismissed at the President's podium speech.

"Instead of listening and hoping to open mind on the sound and logical proposals to stop the privatization of the Agus and Pulangi hydropower plants to keep power rates low, Senior Epira and Mindanao power barges, which are unavailable energy sources, he was intent on drowning down the proposals and insulting that Mindanaons pay for higher rates [even] private power companies," he said in a statement.

He said Mr. Aquino seemed gravely misinformed about the negative impacts of power privatization in Mindanao, the low about transmission energy and the failures of the Epira law.

"It is truly disappointing to note that the President has categorically that things turned sour when the President spoke," Casiño said. PhilStar reports from Lee Salina in Cotabato, Aquilan Z. Zenio, Zebedee Bitoy, Ayan C. Mollaer and Julie C. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

Heart ailments on the rise, stats show

By Rizz T. Ontiveros

HEARTS disheartening news: the number of heart disease cases in the Philippines is on the rise, even as heart disease has remained the leading cause of death in the country these past two years.

Local and international data collated by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) showed that the number of registered deaths due to diseases of the heart has increased to 20 percent in 2009 and 21 percent in 2009, from 163 percent in 2000. Out of every 100,000 deaths all over the Philippines in 2008, 79 were reported to have died of heart disease. This, the NSCB said, surged to 102 deaths in 2009 and 109 deaths in 2008.

The report posted on the NSCB website showed that the National Capital Region (NCR) has the highest prevalence rate of heart disease and heart vessel illness than anywhere else in the country. The cases of the heart have consistently been the leading cause of death in the Philippines for the past ten years, it added. The World Health Organization also cited heart disease as the leading cause of death in the world in 2008.

Among the regions, the highest prevalence rate with 132 deaths due to heart disease in 2009 is consistently in the NCR, "the major center of economic activities in the country," the NSCB said. The Ilocos Region has the second highest prevalence rate, while the lowest prevalence rates are in the ARMM with nine deaths in 2009, and Eastern Visayas, with 65 deaths in 2009.

The NSCB also quoted tips from the Food and Nutrition Research Institute to keep heart disease under control.

• Keep your blood glucose under control. Have an "FGC test" twice a year. The ALC test measures a person's average blood glucose level for the past two to three months. The higher the blood glucose level, the higher the AGE result.

• Keep your blood pressure under control. Below 130/80 is the target for many people.

• Keep your cholesterol level under control. Have it checked at least once a year. The target for most people for Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) or bad cholesterol is below 130, while the High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) or good cholesterol should be above 40 for men, and above 50 for women. Triglycerides should be below 150.

• Make physical activity part of your daily routine. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week. Have a walk-your-dance workout over what activities are best for you.

• Make sure to eat "heart healthy" food, including high-fiber food such as fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads, and nuts. Cut back on meats, butter and other dairy products, since fruits substitutes for nuts as protein chips.

• Lose weight if you need to. If you are overweight, try to exercise most days of the week. Consult a registered dietitian for help in planning meals that lower the fat and calorie content of your diet to reach and maintain a healthy weight.

• If you smoke, quit.

• Check if you need to take an aspirin. Studies have shown that a low dose of aspirin every day can help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

• Take your medications as directed.

DOH eyes info tech in dengue reporting

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE DEPARTMENT of Health (DOH) yesterday announced that it was tapping information technology to implement "specific targeting" of dengue cases in communities in an effort to significantly curb the prevalence of the infectious tropical disease.

In a dengue summit attended by health experts and local government representatives, Health Secretary Enrique Ona said the new system would allow real-time reporting of dengue cases from rural health units and hospitals.

Ona explained that under this system, rural health units or hospitals can immediately report a confirmed dengue case to a barangay-based health team, which will promptly visit that barangay.

"The patient's name and address will be given to the barangay dengue brigade or nearest city health center and the latter will visit the patient on the same day and identify other possible patients in the neighborhood," Ona told reporters at the summit.

He said that as of Aug. 6 more than 68 thousand dengue cases and 417 deaths gathered from sentinel hospitals across the country, which usually takes one to three weeks to complete.

"We will no longer wait for the cases to go up... we'll conduct specific targeting," said Ona.

A total of 136,331 dengue cases have been reported from January to March this year, which is 20.06 percent more than the reported incidence the same period last year.

The bulk of the cases—27.4 percent—has been attributed to Metro Manila. Central Luzon ranked second, accounting for 23.1 percent of the total cases, followed by Calabarzon with 16.9 percent.

Ramon Santos was in and out of work for years. He is skilled and determined but he is an amputee. In between jobs, he would cross and wonder why persons with disability (PWDs) like him do not enjoy equal opportunities. The good news is not but now.

UERMMMCI's Chief, Prosthetics and Orthotics Department, Dr. Ma. Victoria Cruz, guides a client in the proper use of prosthesis

Like him, there is the laboratory technician who never tired because of his efficiency and hard work. He will retire again, the engineer, the teacher—they can all relate with disabilities but their stories will begin as from the point of their disabilities.

But UERMMMCI (PSPO) the first and only School of Prosthetics and Orthotics in the country, gave them hope and a chance to live life the way they deserve to.

Expert faculty with students guiding an ankle disarticulation patient

THE UERMMMCI - PSPO PROMISE!

PSPO is part of an international network (including Limbobaby Trust and Nippon Foundation) with the goal of empowering PWDs in every aspect of their lives. After much research, Trust institutions outside of the Philippines as a country with PWDs who can in their usual of modern technology. And since UERMMMCI's physical therapy and rehabilitation approach was found to be of perfect fit and have matched the institutions' philosophy, UERMMMCI President Ramon A. Orosa-garcia, the Nippon Foundation's Chairman Yohei Sasakawa and Limbobaby Trust Chief Executive Officer Carmen Hunter collaborated in a $7 million grant for UERMMMCI's PSPO construction upon the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in October 2010.

PSPO, now under the UERMMMCI College of Allied Rehabilitation Sciences, is based on World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines and International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) standards.

"We are currently accepting applications for the Bachelor of Science in Prosthetics and Orthotics. Incoming students who are interested would appreciate to know that even our curriculum is

Dean's Lister and Batch 2012 Valedictorian Ms. Carmela Ruth M. Roman (Biological Chemistry), Dr. Ma. Victoria Cruz, Chairman, Department of Prosthetics and Orthotics, UERMMMCI, Dr. Ramon A. Orosa-garcia, President, UERMMMCI Foundation, Sterling Bank of Asia, Inc., Mr. Wilson Tiong, Vice Chairman

Failed launch elates execs; 'jueteng' bettors happy

By Ellen Tordesillas' staff, Bureaux

PALACE officials, diplomats and those handling and managing disasters were relieved that North Korea's long-range rocket had exploded and broken into pieces in the air. In a sense up north, "jueteng" bettors laughed their way to the bank.

Several bettors in the illegal numbers game, which operates in Caguayan, erupted in applause and cheers moments after the numbers they picked—culled from the failed rocket launch—emerged among the winning combinations.

Bet collectors interviewed by the Inquirer from Magsaysay town in Caguayan province—which won 23-57—a rather measley draw—won several thousand pesos for at least two bettors, one winning P6,000 on a bet of P20.

A second bettor ended up P1,000 richer on a bet of P50.

In jueteng numerology, 23 can't may represent a "coffin" while 57 may mean an "aircraft," a bet collector said. The collector asked not to be identified because officially jueteng is banned in the area.

At Lal-lo town, several bettors picked the winning combinations of 17-23, according to another bet collector.

The 17-23 combination supposedly stands for jurong mas salin-saturon-sebat arma, or people anticipating the dropping of scrap metal from the sky.

'Worst is over'

"When news spread that rocket parts may fall in the northern part of Cagayan, everyone started talking about how much each could be made by dealers of scrap metal," the Lal-lo collector said. "They got jueteng winnings, instead."

Malacañang, at least, was relieved that South Korea's launch ended in failure. Reports from the former state earlier said the second stage of the rocket could reach 150 kilometers east of Luzon.

"We are happy that no harm came out of the failed launch," deputy presidential spokesperson Abigail Valte said. "We remind South Korea that we all share this planet and urge it to be a better neighbor."

The Department of Foreign Affairs appealed to North Korea to desist from further acts of provocation.

"Notwithstanding its failure, we note the launch was undertaken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said yesterday.

He urged the North "to cease any future provocative acts, such as the launch of another missile."

"The worst is over," the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) declared.

Flights back to normal

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (Caap) lifted its earlier no-fly order directing pilots to avoid certain areas of Luzon that had been included in the rocket's planned flight.

Hajj carrier Philippine Airlines said that effective 9:30 a.m. yesterday, all 9Js flights zoomed by the airline would follow their normal flight paths had reverted back to their normal flight path.

At least 11 international flights were affected by the no-fly directive on Thursday.

"It's so tough an enormous burden to be lifted off my shoulders," NDRRMC chairman Benito Ramos told reporters.

The NDRRMC earlier expressed concern that the rocket could veer off its projected flight path and land debris or fuel before. The rocket was launched locally to call on residents in some Luzon provinces to stay indoors.

"That missile was like a cannon that was 1,000 times more powerful," Ramos said. "They said it was an overkill but that's better than nothing at all."

The Department of Transportation and Communications and the ban on the sailing of merchant marine and fishing vessels within the area where the Korean rocket might fall had been lifted.

"The ban to end all our exercises," Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) deputy administrator Nick Conti said. "We are lifting our no-sail order on the designated areas effective immediately."

Property work

Some Catholic bishops said they were relieved that the controversial rocket launch worked but they also joined the North Korean people.

"I am happy our prayers were heard," Iba region Bishop Antonio Ramos told reporters over the phone. But he added: "I pity the North Korean people because their leader wasted millions of dollar for a failed project while millions are hungry."

Manila Bishop Broderick Cardenero agreed that the reason we need for the rocket project is because "people have no food. It's good that the rocket launch failed," he added.

Cubao Bishop Honesto Ongtioco said he considered it a miracle that the Chinese parliament for a peaceful resolution of the territorial claims of the Philippines and China to territories in the West Philippine Sea.

The Catholic Church also advised the government against wasting US help. Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, chair of the Public Affairs Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), said the resources would become more complicated if the Philippine government allowed the United States or any other country to use the facilities in the country.

Iñiguez also suggested that the House of Representatives' Committee on Foreign Relations resume its investigation in the Chinese parliament for a peaceful resolution of the territorial claims of the Philippines and China to territories in the West Philippine Sea.

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Back to beaches

The news that the rocket launch had failed came as a relief to residents in the Cagayan hiking communities of Gonzaga, Buguey and Santa Ana, which had been declared at "no-hiking" zones.

"Everything is going back to normal now. We no children scaring me to names on the beaches while our fishermen are busy preparing their boats, saying to sail out is an example," said Kristin Abbodi, chair of the Santa Ana's fisheries and aquatic resources council.

Tourists who had booked rocket launch did not come in a surprise, according to Dawn Bituin-es Campbell in Santa Ana. "Our people have always believed in the power of prayers," she said.

Days before the launch, Cagayan residents circulated prayers by text messaging.

Aurora, Baler, Legazpi

In Aurora, Gilbert Magno, a fisherman from Baler, said he lost P60,000 in potential income from sailing ban. Magno said the banned orders not to sail out to sea. He said he could have used the money for his three children, one of whom is in college.

Tim Baler fishermen owning banana defied the no-sail order, saying they had to feed their families. Fishermen in specific areas followed the sail ban.

In some areas in Isabela province, government workers distributed food packs to fisherfolk following the fishing ban.

In Legazpi City, authorities lifted the sail ban that had been declared in the provinces of Catanduanes and Camarines.

In Quezon province, fishers in Dalahican in Lucena City, fumigated their boat a day's earnings. "I decided not to fish. Now, I'm lost a day's earning for nothing," Dalahican fisherman Edgardo Abisa said. But the failed

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

12 nabbed in Laguna for illegal logging

ILLEGAL logging continues in Southern Tagalog region. INQUIRER FILE

By Marlon Ceres, Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP FAUSTINO RIZAL, Laguna—Twelve persons were arrested in an anti-illegal logging operation that resulted in the confiscation of about 103,000 board feet of sawed lumber in Laguna province.

Friday's operation in the towns of Cavinti, Kalayaan, Pila and Pangil in Laguna signaled the start of Oplan R.E.B.I.S. Ehimat sa Kinabukasan (Reserve for Development of our Ecosystem), a joint campaign of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Interior and Local Government, Laguna provincial government, provincial police office and the Philippine Army against illegal logging in Laguna.

Calabanicon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) DENR director Reynaldo Juan said Laguna was identified as a transshipment point of illegally cut lumber from Quezon province.

"These were already sawed or processed lumber supposedly for shipment to Manila," said Juan, who joined a team that raided warehouses in Barangay San Antonio in Cavinti town.

He said his team's operation that started past midnight Thursday confiscated 20,000 board feet of lauan, a type of dipterocarp, that suspected loggers abandoned when the authorities arrived in the area.

In Barangay Bulihan in Pila, seven persons were arrested after authorities conducted random inspection of trucks and closed vans, said Senior Insp. Alcuin Calandegan, chief of the Laguna Special Operations Group.

Calandegan said their team, which started operating at around 5:30 a.m., recovered 15,000 board feet of sawed.

"We think this is the biggest confiscation [of hot lumber] so far since President Aquino gave an order to stop illegal logging," said Laguna police director Senior Supt. Gilbert Cruz.

Aside from the lumber, authorities also recovered 32 power saws, four band saws and six vehicles used in the attempt to ship the wood products.

Cruz said the combined value of the seized lumber is worth around P15 million if sold.

The arrested suspects were brought to the Laguna police headquarters here and will be charged with violations of the Forestry Reform Code.

Tree controversy becomes laboratory for tree-balling policy

BAGUIO CITY—The controversy over the fate of 182 trees, which a shopping mall intends to uproot and transfer, has provided the government with a laboratory to help design a mechanism for transplanting Baguio's pine trees.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has informed SM Investments Corp. that it has been documenting the uprooted trees standing on the western section of Luneta Hill to make way for the expansion of SM City Baguio, said Augusto Lagui, technical director of the DENR Cordillera's Forest Management Service.

Lagui said government foresters supervised the transfer of 46 almaciga trees and a pine tree. The operation were suspended by a 72-hour temporary environmental protection order (Tepo) issued by the regional trial court that lapsed on Friday afternoon. The Tepo, which has been repeatedly extended indefinitely until one is resolved, addressed a complaint filed by the Cordillera Global Network (CGN), an alliance of various groups opposed to the displacement of 182 trees by the mall.

Among the arguments raised by CGN against SM's tree-balling plans was the claim that few transplanted pine trees survive the process, which Lagui said had been validated by government case studies.

The issue DENR study involved the transfer of 95 trees at the forested area of the Baguio City Economic Zone in 2009.

The report said 114 or 120 pine trees (with trunk diameters measuring 30 centimeters and below) survived the transfer, while six of 29 pine trees (with trunks measuring more than 30 cm) thrived, all in a four-month span. The same report said none of 16 pine trees (with 30 to 20 cm trunks) survived transplanting from January to April 2009.

Another follow-up study that your will be undertaken to determine the condition of 411 pine trees displaced by the construction of a building by the Philippine Veterans Bank Authority," Lagui said.

Permits

Clarence Bagsiao, DENR Cordillera director, said the agency issued eight tree-balling permits from 2002 to 2011 for 675 trees, which were displaced because of development projects. He said 310 trees were earth balled in 2008, which represents the single biggest volume of transplanted trees recorded in the city.

Earth balling is an accepted technology dating back to the late 1970s, Lagui said. Earth balling refers to the process where mechanized equipment is used to uproot a tree without damaging its major root systems. The equipment then ships the tree for transplanting in a different area.

Studies conducted by DENR in the 1990s showed that only pine trees with trunks measuring less than 15 cm in diameter have the best chance of surviving the transfer.

"But we intend to learn if bigger and older trees can also thrive when moved," Lagui said. Pine tree roots are sensitive, he said, and the process of uprooting alone usually damages the roots.

Based on an exchange of information between DENR and University of the Philippines Los Baños experts hired by SMIC, the agency believed that moisture, closeness of the relocation area and the age of the tree are necessary for keeping transplanted pine trees alive, Lagui said.

Lagui said the transfer was done in night. "It was DENR which recommended that it be done at night. We need to make sure the room and time for the tree keeps their moisture, which is why the optimum time for earth balling must be at night to take advantage of the lower temperature," he said. His said Cabrera, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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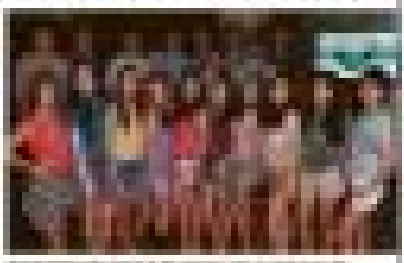

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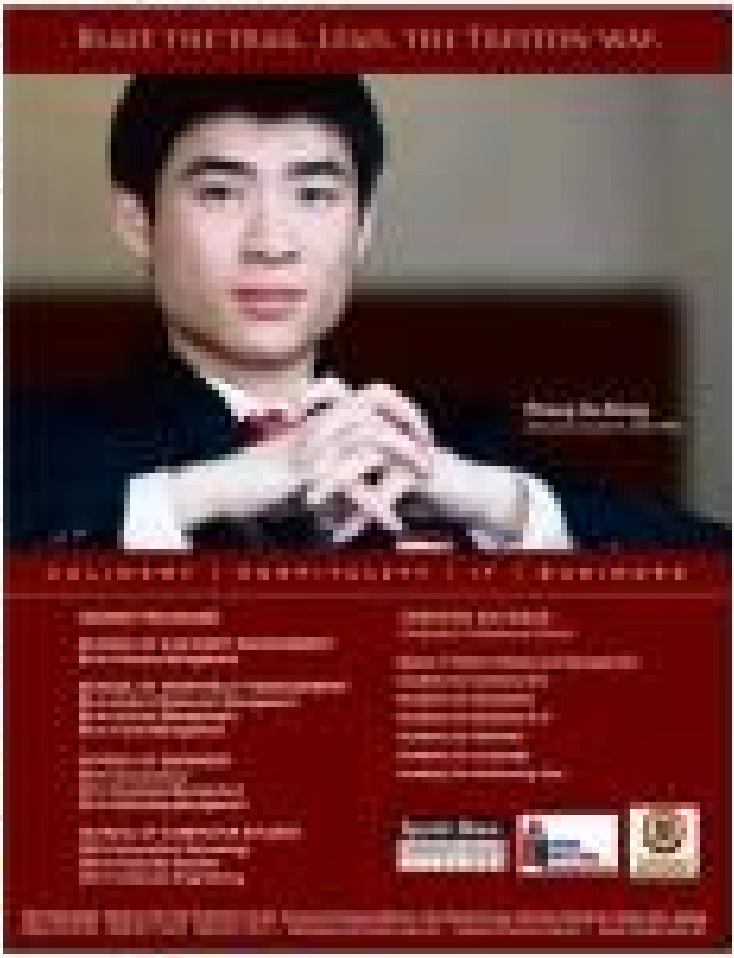

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Still beyond the reach

EDITORIAL

MORE waiting ahead. That's the disheartening message millions of Filipino coconut farmers got from the recent announcement by the Aquino administration that it would not, for the moment, take action on the almost P85 billion worth of sequestered shares of the giant conglomerate Jose Miguel Corp. that the Supreme Court has ruled belongs to the government, which is mandated to hold them in trust for the farmers. The high court further specified that the money is "to be used only for the benefit of all coconut farmers, and for the development of the coconut industry."

Loud and clear. But what confounding noise and fog the issue of the coconut levy funds has been embroiled in all these years, such that, nearly four decades after the government of the strongman Ferdinand Marcos began collecting cash from impoverished coconut farmers supposedly to develop the industry, and with the levy now worth billions, not a cent has gained the hand of any coconut tiller anywhere. Instead, from the outset, a easily ingenuable thicket was built around the levy, in the form of intricate business arrangements involving dozens of companies, subsidiaries and such through which the funds were said to have been held and managed.

Or mismanaged, because while the levy gave the likes of Marcos associate numero uno Eduardo Cojuangco the leverage to found a sprawling business empire apparently headquartered by the farmers' hard-earned cash—from the United Coconut Planters Bank of which Cojuangco was founding president and CEO, to various firms, companies and mills that in time would collectively own, on paper, some 47 percent of SMC, another Cojuangco-controlled business—the coconut industry, meanwhile, saw only decline and deprivation through the years.

Coconut is still grown in 80 provinces, with an estimated 3.5 million farmers and some 25 million Filipinos—a quarter of the country's population, mostly its "poorest of the poor"—dependent on the industry. Their livelihood, however, is in danger of collapse, "wrecked by falling farmers as a result of senile trees, fertilization problems and the adverse impact of climate change," as the bishops recently reported. Many of the farmers who paid the mandatory levy between 1972 and 1982 are also either old or dead, their claim to just restitution from the government still tied up in endless, convoluted court cases that have, in the meantime, made millionaires of hunchy lawyers, accountants and government bureaucrats, while the intended beneficiaries themselves have sunk further into poverty.

The Supreme Court had provided a glimmer of hope with its ruling that the almost P85-billion bloc, or some 24 percent of the SMC shares, does indeed belong to the farmers, one of the governments that must now put in place a viable mechanism to distribute the proceeds of such funds. However, the Philippine Coconut Producers Federation, or Cocofed, promptly threw a monkey wrench into the process by appealing the ruling, saying the bloc belonged to 1 million unnamed farmers under its wing. (Who are these farmers?) That pending appeal, says Malacañang, is what prevents it at present from immediately unfreezing the funds to lead client bishops the struggling tillers.

Cojuangco, meanwhile, one can rest easy. His lawyers have also persuaded the Supreme Court that 20 percent of the original 47 percent of SMC shares (those whittled down to 24) that used to be owned by cronyhaven be leased or established to manage the coconut levy funds is—wouldn't you know it—his and not the farmers'. The P55-billion shares were "legally acquired," in the high court's wording, setting aside the charge that Cojuangco had illegally dipped his hands into money deposited at UCPB to purchase the bloc. A dissenting justice, now Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales, shared no words in calling the decision the "joke of the century."

It doesn't take extraordinary intelligence to see the epic injustice of this setup. The money rescued from the sweat and labor of millions of Filipino coconut farmers has stretched just about everyone, except the farmers themselves. The Aquino administration must lend priority to righting this outrageous wrong, one least because a large part of the national economy remains rooted in the industry that's been blighted by a combination of natural and poverty manmade afflictions. Sen. Jobo Arroyo is right to ask: "After 25 years of waiting, will the coconut farmers ever reap the monies mandatorily levied on them? The prospects are obscure and their wait still remain."

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'Fire sale monopoly'

VIEWPOINT

Jaime L. Miranda

THE MARCOS coconut levy robbed farmers blind for years. Are those victims spending sleepless nights on the P84.1-billion San Miguel sequestered shares?

President Aquino must be hoping not, as questioned 700 million San Miguel Corp. shares (and the Supreme Court hands down a final decision on claims, quarterly dividends, over the last nine years, totaled at P9.1 billion. Mine have killed for him.

Ferdinand Marcos' Presidential Decree No. 276 used assisted law to clamp a levy on coconut farmers in the provinces. Their trees bombarded a hydra of coco mills, a bank, even a producers' federation that never answered the names of supposed coc millers members. Eduardo Cojuangco, the coconut contrivers, ran it. People Power threw him into exile with the decider in 1986.

In the post-Edsa Revolt era, an Aquino commission signed up the best legislators that livelihood items could buy to keep the plunder. The ups-&-hats-off-to-the-people-wave campaign. He called it as most honorably fo-t-bot that compelling Supreme Court decision, Aquino partisan cited, Cojuangco could legally pocket 16.2 million in San Miguel Corp. shares.

"The joke of the century," snapped then Associate Justice (and ex-Marcos Tourism minister) Conchita Carpio Morales. Cojuangco "used his position and influence to obtain the shares for himself through dummy corporations and fraudulent transactions. It has continued out of my position here ... and cannot accept the ponencia's fiduciary duty ..."

Go through the fine print of its entire Supreme Court decision on conversion of SMC shares. Budget Secretary Florencio Abad suggested in an Inquirer interview. It has a curiously "unclothed in significance". Should the government sell its shares, did San Miguel Corp. "shall have the exclusive option to buy said shares and (it) at P75 per share."

Wasn't (is?) that a Court-sanctioned fire sale for a only monopoly? A share now commands P114 in the stock exchange. Current industry forecasts options are being raised how how the Aquino administration can prevent further theft of the levy until how to use it less by the future. It is mulling a trust fund and reminder—law on loan pending bills in Congress.

The track record is shabby. Sen. Juker investor caution. Proceeds from the P52-billion sale of military camps arose in benefit soldiers. While others made a killing, the soldiers were left out. Arroyo has called for the immediate enactment of the measure to ensure the turn of events.

Impoverished coconut farmers cannot wait forever for the Supreme Court, says Secretary Joel Rocamora of the National Anti-Poverty Commission. The administration could best act against the organizational anarchy underwriting a P1.6-billion, five-year "road map" to revitalize the coconut industry.

The commission identified 400 poorest municipalities in the country, 189 have 400 cash-crop coconut. In the first year of this road map, the funds will go to 150 coconut farmers in Camarines Sur, Ilocos, Albay, Quezon, Zamboanga, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar, Eastern Samar, Davao Oriental and Surigao.

Last December, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile urged Congress to approve a trust fund for coconut farmers. Other bills, three in sets would be dissipated, he warned. UCPB has been criticized for issuing questionable loans to San Miguel. The bank is now under a P50-billion government rehabilitation program.

Socialist farmers' groups, along with Bulacan Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez, back the creation of a trust fund from the sales of SMC shares, for the coconut industry rehabilitation. They also urge an updated census of coconut planters. No "wing wing" group should take over the farmers' wave.

President Aquino has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to curb the economic ills he has vowed all on the small coconut farmers. This decision got. "For good, all nature is too little," Tennyson said.

(Email: jaime_miranda@Yahoo.com)

Giving credit where it is due

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THE LATEST (February) data on the performance of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the Bureau of Customs (BOC) should provide more than a small amount of comfort to those who are trespassing on the part of the Pilipinas administration's competence. While one month's performance of these agencies is obviously no indication of a trend, it is still a very encouraging sign. Kim Henares of the BIR and Rufi Biazon of the BOC deserve the applause of the Philippine people for jobs well done.

Only consider. The BIR's tax collections increased to P61 billion in February this year from P51 billion last year, which comes out to a whopping 20.6 percent—a collection performance which hasn't been seen in more than 20 years, without any new taxes, for the most part. The BOC collections rose by 23 percent, also a record.

More to the point, on an annualized basis (and that, of course, is a heroic assumption), this means that our tax effort—the ratio of tax revenues to GDP—is now higher than what was targeted in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP). (The new cost of the PDP's low targets for tax effort) The increase of 3.0 percentage points a year for the BIR and 3.1 percentage points for the BOC up to 20 16, for the 2012 figures (January and February) then mean a tax effort increase of 0.7 and 0.8 percentage points, respectively—and that is extremely striking to anyone in. Plus, it must be remembered that for 2011, while the BIR under Kim Henares surpassed its tax collection by 6.4, the BOC under the unfortunately departed Alberto Alvarez's decreased 111 effort (by 0.2).

So let us give credit where it is due. And for the one property who point out that P5 billion of the BIR's collection increase was from the Fraser Road taxes, which seems to be still the subject of a court case, it must be also pointed out that since the P5 billion, the BIR collections could still have increased by close to 20 percent. This, according to Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran, a correct projection and, to call a dismal good performance.

Serious options are being raised how how the Aquino administration can prevent further theft of the levy until how to use it less by the future. It is mulling a trust fund and reminder—law on loan pending bills in Congress.

The track record is shabby. Sen. Juker investor caution. Proceeds from the P52-billion sale of military camps arose in benefit soldiers. While others made a killing, the soldiers were left out. Arroyo has called for the immediate enactment of the measure to ensure the turn of events.

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(Email: jaime_miranda@Yahoo.com)

Why is the BOC so slow? Because the government seems to be overloaded. According to the latest DBM annual report, the average caseload per government in a year is 233 cases for non-litigation and 513 cases for prosecution.

And take a three-year average. Other local Revenue there are not enough prosecutors. As of mid-December 2011, 342 (months more) for prosecution were audited, while as of March 15 this year, the number had risen to 384 positions. The prosecutorial cluster are thinned by supernumeraries in the judiciary.

Are the positions vacant because prosecutors are underpaid? Prosecutors, thanks to the April 2010 Prosecution Service Act, now earn, on the lowest level, close to P65,000 a month. That is not peanuts. That Act, by the way, created some than 1,000 more prosecutor positions. Those now positions have to be supported to be filled. Because, out of this setting, there's no still against.

So why then are the original positions vacant? Because Malacañang, out of about 300 recommendations made by the DOJ early in 2011 for prosecutors, has approved only 90 as of July—in short vacant positions. The remaining recommendations have remained enacted upon, mouldering first on the desk of the Executive Secretary and then on the desk of Ochoa.

And why are the 1,000 newly created prosecutor slots not filled up yet? Because no money was allocated for them in the 2012 budget.

And that's how the administration fulfills its campaign promise of strengthening the DOJ as part of its war against corruption.

A Burma preelection survey

SOCIAL CLIMATE

Mahar Mangahas

ISSA 16 (ighty controlled Burma (Myanmar), the people's voices are beginning to be heard through opinion polling. Just before the by-election on April 1, a survey was done in the Ayeyarwaddy, Yangon, and Naypyidaw regions by Myanma News, an India-based agency run by Burmese exiles.

The poll was done on March 24-31 on a sample of 361 respondents (5-percent-error margin) by a team of eight experienced enumerators and community organizers. The questionnaire design, pilot testing, and training for the survey were done in Yangon by researchers from the Thai nonprofit Metroview Group. Untitled is "a collection of Myanmar nationals and international volunteers who work together to create positive change across Myanmar," per its Facebook page.

Feelings of the Myanmar poll

• 85 percent of the respondents said they knew about the coming by-election; 12 percent did not know.

• 85 percent said they planned to vote; 11 percent said they did not. The intention to vote rises sharply with schooling: less than 10 percent among illiterates, over 80 percent among those completing elementary education, over 90 percent among those with middle education, over 96 percent among those with higher education, over 95 percent among graduates, and 100 percent among post-graduates.

• 84 percent said they knew the method of voting, 15 percent said they did not. The sources of their knowledge were, in percentages, our witnesses 28, brochures 26, friends 16, family 11, television 11, radio 6, past experience 3, and others 3. (I assume the term "enrollment" in the report means "candidacy" —MM.)

• 87 percent said they knew the names of their constituent and the party name of the constituent.

• 74 percent said they knew the policy of their constituent. Sources of their knowledge, in percentage: brochures 36, constituent 26, family 13, friends 10, TV 9, radio 7, and others 3.

Predicting the election outcome. "Which party will you vote for?" Answer percentages: NLD 68, USDP 32, NDF 2, (a-answer 8. This is the lowest line would than candidates the credibility of the survey. A consistent majority of the vote was predicted for the NLD to win almost all of the seats at stake.

By winning 41 seats in the by-election, Aung San Suu Kyi's National League of Democracy (NLD) will hold 6.4 percent of seats in the parliament. The ruling United Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and the Ethnic Nationalities Democratic Party won one seat each.

"Why do you choose that party?" Answer percentages: party policy and constituent 45, party activities 22, qualifications and capability of constituent 19, no answer 13.

"Which party do you think will win this by-election?" Answer percentages: NLD 98, USDP 31, NDF 1, no answer 10.

"Do you think the current Myanmar political situation has changed positively?" Answer percentages: Yes 92, No 14, don't know 22, no answer 21.

"Do you think current Myanmar politics has improved?" Answer percentages: Yes 90, No 6, don't want to answer 44.

See No percentages for the question "Do you think current Myanmar politics has improved?" if. Between 0-5, primary education 29-37, middle education 22-29, high school education 5-9-6, graduates 32-33, post graduates 33-13. Balances from 100 percent are don't know/ no answer (DK/NA).

See No percentages, by age, for the question "Do you believe the socioeconomics of Myanmar will progress in the next three years": 18-28 years old 91-97, 28-38 yrs 93-7, 40-48 yrs 92-8, over 48 yrs 96-3. Missing balances from 100 are DK/NA.

This survey report concluded: with the follow ing feedback from the Untitled's interviewers:

• Most of the respondents who are positive about reality from blackjellies are getting a chance to buy a mobile phone provided by USDP and plan to vote for it.

• Some interviewers observed that some households are not still afraid to vote.

• In the Yangon and the Dagon with has area, the USDP conducted a campaign to expose roads.

• Some respondents said they would vote for the USDP because they are in debt to it for providing short-term loans.

• Most respondents said they are voting for the NLD because of being Suu San Kyi.

I hope it will not take too long before opinion polling can openly be done and then freely published in Burma.

* * *

The Myanma News Agency (www.narmia.com) was founded in 2008 by three Burmese exiles in India. Specializing in Burma-related news and multimedia, it bills itself as "a new window into events affecting the lives of the Burmese people."

Mangahas were online in 2000. And now has 56 paid employees, including Burmese and foreign journalists from Burma, India, Bangladesh, Thailand and China. It has a head office in New Delhi, a liaison office in Bangkok, a news bureau in Chiang Mai, an office in Indiana (India), and underground units in Burma.

Myanmar works closely with the Southeast Asian Press Alliance, the International Media Support and the Committee to Protect Journalists. It is a founding member of Burma News International (BNI), a network of Burma's independent media organizations formed outside the country in May 2007, the International Press Institute honored Mizzima as "Free Media Pioneer 2007".

A postelection interview of Mizzima founder Soe Myint by Radio Free Asia is found at "Time Bid supporters relish victory," April 1 (www.rfa.org).

* * *

Contact MM: www.ssrc.org.ph or mahar.mangahas@ssrc.org.ph

'Siete Palabras' with Br. Armin

COMMENTARY

Nene Sta. Romana Cruz

THE Holy Monday constitutive meeting initiated by the National Book Development Board and the Department of Education with key players in the book publishing industry could not have happened at a better time. The major item on the agenda—contributed practices in the industry—is widely known, spoken about in hushed tones, and for the most, something extreme and beyond anybody's reach. It is a problem that is compounded by National Artists Bienvenido Lumbera and F. Sionil Jose, was encouraging and provided a set of hope on this shared concern.

This grew out of a special board meeting of the NBDB in mid-February when the discussion led to the issue of how to address the problem more directly in the promotion of excellence in the industry but also in ethical practices within the sector. There is a jarring and disturbing contradiction in books as vehicles for molding minds and vital to national development, and engaging in less than ethical practices in various guises. In both the public and private schools—and all the stakeholders in the meeting knowledge? The discussion gave women by panic and entente deliberations, especially as the issue was then raised by Education Undersecretary and NBDB vice chair Francis Bardo. While aware of the keen competition in the trade, we also know that it is not a level playing field to continue if we did not take a stand publicly on this issue. We cannot continue to talk about promoting excellence in the industry when we are lured and hampered with a strong and embarrassing public perception that the book industry in the country needs major cleansing.

We need to exercise urbanism to a corrupt organization," Education Secretary Br. Armin Luistro FSC said, and removing the meeting meant that he was serious in confirming his very new tact. He reiterated that as a matter of policy, the DepEd is keenly interested in ensuring that in the [illegible] procurement of books in the public schools would need, he mentioned organized—not [illegible]—Multiple Tongue materials in the 12 major Philippine languages: Tagalog, Kapampangan, Sinugaboanon, Iloko, Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausug, Maguindanaon, Maranao and Chabacanon.

This also goes from the classes to reiterate the [illegible] priorities in the classroom to have every student in class have his own set of textbooks, a Library/Reading Corner in every elementary public school, and the promotion and development of Library/Rules.

If Sionil Jose talked for open shelves in a less lot, remembering his childhood and his love of books and reading, he also spoke about the library in Ibaan, Pampanga. The selection of supplementary reading materials is also an area that demands attention. November will now be officially celebrated as National Reading Month and July highlighted as the National Children's Book Day. We need to produce books that are reading especially among our students is imperative.

The discussion was highlighted by the signing of the memorandum of agreement between the Department of Education and the NBDB affirming everyone's commitment to honor and uphold ethical practices in the book industry.

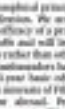
By the end of the meeting, however, many questions remained unanswered. Clearly, continuing dialogues need to be scheduled to resolve these nagging issues. Credit and corruption are all levels, whether pervasive or exaggerating numbers, is a difficult issue to tackle, but as Secretary Luistro reminded us, patient and steadfast in the giving of token gifts to government personnel abroad's concessions to the perpetuation of the culture of corruption.

On are we to do something about it or do we just shrug it off as too pervasive a culture to both- er about? It would be so tragic to just throw up our arms in frustration—and in defeat.

Nene Sta. Romana Cruz (nenecruz@gmail.com) is chair of the National Book Development Board, a trustee of the Ateneo de Manila Foundation, and a member of the Japan-Ateneo Foundation.

Pioneering K-12

BUSINESS MATTERS



Edilberto C. de Jesus

PUBLIC elementary schools would have closed down their classrooms by this time and released for the summer break the roughly 13.2 million pupils who had enrolled for the 2011-2012 school year. About 1.186 million of these pupils obtained their elementary school diplomas. Perhaps, 1.23 million, or about two-thirds of this cohort, will proceed to high school in June. Following the Department of Education's plan, these pupils will be the first to have the opportunity to complete the K-12 basic Education program.

Some quarters will oppose K-12, the flagship education program of the Aquino administration. The objections may: There are those who want a quick cure that will by itself instantly heal all of the ailments afflicting basic education. They demand proof that K-12 will reduce the classroom shortage, improve teacher quality and raise learning outcome among students. This, despite the repeated assurance of the education secretary, Br. Armin Luistro FSC, that K-12 is only one in the DepEd's 10-point basic education reform agenda.

Others criticize the government's haste in implementing the program. Many have forgotten that the Philippines already had an 11-year basic education cycle during the American colonial period. But the Commonwealth government, believing 11 years of pre-university studies inadequate, increased the number of years of basic education to 12 years, which was done, and to add two years to high school, which was not. We have been waiting over 75 years to extend the basic education cycle beyond what we had in the 1930s.

In the meantime, the rest of the world has implemented the K-12 system. Do we need to do more research to follow suit? The entire world, of course, can be completely wrong about K-12. But we are not determining the "truth" of K-12 as a physical law or philosophical principle that must have universal application. We are considering the advantages and efficacy of a practical system that involves trade-offs and will fit better more- aged by some groups rather than others.

A number of our ambassadors have expressed concern that our 10-year basic education cycle will work against the interests of Filipino workers seeking employment abroad. Perhaps, these countries are insisting non-tariff barriers against our export of labor. But when all the retailers in the road are moving in one direction, prudence would seem to dictate that we do not insist on driving against the traffic.

What is also difficult to comprehend is the contention that K-12 is an elitist measure to align our system to those of developed countries and make it easier for wealthy students to gain admission to their schools. These students will indeed benefit from the program. But even developing countries have structured additional years of basic education. In the Philippines, the best private schools require 11 years of basic education, against the 10 years in public schools. K-12 will help level the playing field for those who cannot afford the elite schools.

With four additional years at Senior High School (SHS) or Grades 11 and 12, students going to Philippine schools will begin college better prepared to handle tertiary level materials. If col- leges and universities do the right thing, they may be able to complete most college courses in a shorter period of time and, therefore, at a lower cost.

According to DepEd data from 2001 to 2010, only 66 percent of the pupils who enroll in a Grade 1 public primary school continue on to high school and only 57 percent receive their secondary school diploma. A 2005 DepEd survey indicated that only 56 percent of graduating high school students were planning on pursuing a college education. Only about 29 percent, therefore, would benefit from the 600 pre-college courses.

Fortunately, the DepEd plans that the 2012 program include more than just the preparatory academic courses for college bound students. It will also offer options for those with the talent for sports and the arts, as well as a technical vocational track for those who want to compete in the labor market after high school. The government funded 1800 skilled help the 22 percent of high school graduates who lack the financial means, or the ability or the interest in academic subjects to acquire additional skills for the world of work.

The 16-D Program may also help keep in school the 17 percent of high school students who drop out or fail the high school academic requirements. Between 2008 and 2009, according to the USAID Philippine Education Sector Assessment Project, secondary school enrollment dropped by only 3.7 percent, but this still numbered nearly 215,000 students. About 46 percent of the dropouts cited poverty as the reason why they may be disposed to trade off pre-college physics and algebra for the technical vocational track.

Those concerned with the competitiveness of the country's human resources, with the effectiveness of its higher education system, and with issues of equity and inclusive development should support the K-12 program.

Edilberto C. de Jesus is president of the Ateneo Graduate School of Management.

The big picture

I WRITE this at the risk of sounding like an ignorant snob and admitting the multitude of sixteen-lighting pessimists to advance their cause. Although I know I might not say as flippant a person now posts. I feel compelled to express an opinion devoured out in the current controversy over an issue as sensitive as the city's pine trees.

I went to Catholic schools for my high school and college education. And although I wasn't able to complete a college degree because of my restlessness, I can sincerely say that I was taught the culture of social activism and environmentalism as we say it ups.

I come from a school where we deans learn to go out of their way while walking in the corridors to dispose of candy wrappers in receptacles no garbage cans, and where planting tree in the Rizal Institute is considered an extracurricular activity.

I've majored on my own order of our environmental conduct with which I have carried growing up. I've never littered on purpose that didn't hurt me first. I've never squished a bug for simply passing the dinner table. I've learned to segregate in my own small ways and spare shrubs that have sat in the family garden.

I've never been outspoken about my advocacies but I can proudly say that from that I've done my fair share of respecting nature and what it has to offer.

I really admire the concerned citizens of Baguio for standing up to a capitalist giant such as SM to protect the 1,82 trees that didn't just mention to be for the past years but have also come to symbolize the very emblem that the city is known for: love, effort all, known as the City of Pines.

But it isn't the City of Your 100 Pine Trees." I call upon all those who fight for these endangered trees on Luneta Hill to not just stand up for the lucky 162 trees but to fight for all the unknown, voiceless trees in this country that are populated by insensitive, urban dans till. It's good to fight for those trees that we always better if we child more than just, save a few with grandiose acts and save more with modest acts of charity.

This issue about SM has become a classic example of to- tech activism. It has become a bandwagon phenomenon that has bypassed the real threat to the environment in general and San Fernando's entirety on what's maintained to be the eco- nomic. This has led me to an observation. "Why only those 162 trees?" Why hasn't there been such loud voices against the gradual degradation of trees all throughout the countries, or even just within the city, all these years? Why do we need something so high profile as the "SM 162" to start marching out, running, and writing our complaints on Facebook?

Let's think. Let's be authentic environmentalists and not just "Baguio-tists." Let's take not just 162 but all who endanger nature and life in general to court and other proper forums for vindication. Most importantly, let's all be environmental activists in our own small ways.

I've watched growing my 10 years' worth the young trees in front of the house actually been uprooted on the details of the issue. In fact, I've never even posted a Facebook status about the matter because I never wanted to speak so vehemently about an issue I didn't fully understand.

My opinion now is based on what I have seen and read with my own two eyes—and as far as I know, there are many people who have been misinformed who have probably done just as much for the environment than those selling in front of SM right now.

I do not intend to judge or generalize. I don't have the statistics to back me up. I admire the brave advocates: lawyers, dancers, students and every faceless citizen by tasting the place that is my home. I'm only here to tell you everybody know that I equally admire all those who have helped the environment in their own amazing ways. I wish to remind everybody that there are different avenues for the same advocacy. No plan seems to wrong, but joining simply to belong is NEVER the right advocacy.

Fight for what you believe in, but first what's teaching. Fight for all trees, not just for those 162 trees. Truth be told, I've seen some of those tree advocates toss their cars around the city more often than not. I've met the same activists who drop or fail with their heavy plastic bags in tow.

From my own skewed perspective, this issue has turned into a situation of "holier than thou." In reality, the world's guardians of the Earth have been infiltrated by pop culture fence-sitters. It's also become another page straight out of "The Emperor's New Clothes."

Again, my intentions are not to prejudice but to be enlightened by those who remain truly committed to the environment. Neither is it my aim to project myself as an infallible and righteous champion of Mother Nature. I just wish to say that "indeed, the emperor doesn't have clothes on."

I respect human reactions from all quarters for my opinion. I will be called an ignorant, indifferent cultural elitist by some, but I'll keep being an environmentalist the best way I know. I won't stand by looking for the streets to weed out trashs in the very near future. But until then, I'll just sit back and spare every bag that passes the Dimes' table.

John Mark Manuel, 20, used to work as a call center agent in Baguio City.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Unpublished articles will not be returned. Only those articles published

THEY SAID

Political stability

"Besides having strong macroeconomic fundamentals, the country is benefiting from political stability and a popular government seen by many as strongly committed to improving governance and reducing poverty."

—Marco Hernández, World Bank country director, saying the Philippine economy is in good shape with inflation stable at around 2.7 percent, unemployment down and overall investment and growth prospects good.

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Fragrant flowers, memory of home

LETTERS

THIS LETTER is in reaction to the article "Miss Sarah was flowers" (INQUIRER, 3/29/12) written by Shelly Regina Davila. Please permit me to refer to her as Shelly.

Shelly writes beautifully, keeping with the poetic (reader's) mood: peasants scented, those well showers her topic is, at once inviting a nostalgic notion to sit back with her shawl on, read with undivided attention, chew on its particles and, most, inner and possible.

Than at least I admire Shelly's Tia Sing she takes believably founded flowers to people of all shapes. Flora's as much in Shelly's article that makes her flowers' fragrance spread over to my senses, and to my mind, up to now—the memory of home, bringing supine, manifested to my mind up festival, my dance up Shelly for who died at a young age, supposition to take up says at some young time. I feel now, the smell of the incense still wafts in my mind, as well as the name of the deities of my father who died at a young age and left me happy memories.)

Thank you, dear Shelly. I am 40 and you are 20—a 17 year difference. You may call me Tita Irma. I deliver at least from you.

After current reach 40 without experiencing her blood pressure going up, once in a while, caused by angry reactionaries, etc.

One thing about the through. I am, by nature, a happy person: life of the party, me being the baton down with laughter, I was told.

I am also the opposite of that. I have cold moments for which my friends say I am too timid to let them go.

Maybe all this, I confess that I belong to a group of people "who sit back, assume that all's well with their world and with themselves."

Thank you, Inquirer, and Shelly.

IRMORA B. FERRER
retired lawyer from MLQ School of Law,
Intramuros
homeservice@yahoo.com.ph

DSWD explains why it 'stopped' Ecoweb

THIS IS a reaction to Tim N. Feb's article titled "In Iligan City, red tape stops group from helping build homes." (INQUIRER, 3/30/12) Below are its excerpts and my Ecoweb response. Field Action and Benefits (Ecoweb) was "stopped" by the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office 10 from processing the Iligan bunkhouse.

Fid is a member of Ecoweb. Its intended: On reflection dialogue and press conference held on March 23 at Annex Boardgood in Iligan City and he was to the head-top of the Task Force on the Disposition of Recovered Logs held that same day. The conflict of interest that same Fid's report is obvious in that he could wear the artists his report. Worse, his actual agency appear as if it were the offsite.

Our staff joined the reflection dialogue to explain to the participants our plans regarding the recovered logs and how these were to be disposed. The dialogue and press conference, hosted and facilitated by Ecoweb, were supposed to give response and were group, including Fid, to DSWD, an opportunity to explain their side of the issue on the recovered logs. Sadly, a non-appearance that Ecoweb had an ulterior motive in organizing the dialogue.

Allow us to point out that the DSWD is the custodian and custodian of the logs that were donated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources last Dec. 22. Per this contract, the DSWD has extended these logs as in the form of accounts; it holds itself accountable for these logs and is exercising utmost care in monitoring that these logs are used and disposed of properly.

Ecoweb has been operating a business model and various projects following protocols and processes—sewing, cutting, and labeling. DSWD owned logs without proper authorization immediately after discovering risk, the DSWD ordered Ecoweb to discontinue its Action operations.

The DSWD follows a set of guidelines for the disposition of the logs. These guidelines have been approved by the Task Force on the Disposition and Utilization of the Recovered Logs, which is composed of representatives from the DSWD, Department of Education, city government of Iligan, faith-based organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

Ecoweb sent a letter to the DSWD on Jan. 23, 2012, requesting that it be given logs for its shelter project which involves the construction of 500 houses for victims of Tropical Storm "Sendong." By no such, Ecoweb and the staff of the Iligan City Environment and Management Office's, that would mean giving all the logs to Ecoweb. Ecoweb is Ecoweb, to the exclusion of all other groups which have similar requests.

The DSWD Field Office 10 assures NGOs that are willing to help out in the recovery and rehabilitation efforts for Sendong victims. But it does not mean any group with motives other than helping Sendong survivors to get these logs.

—ARACELI F. MILAGELO,
regional director
Department of Social Welfare and Development

I welcome the DSWD's reaction to the article, but I maintain that it will not change the fact that Ecoweb with Inquirer officials of Annex, Iligan City during the reflection dialogue. They felt that there was a delay in the disposition of the logs. The reports was fair and balanced. In fact, it included DSWD's statements.

—TITO SATTERFIELD,
correspondent,
Inquirer Mindanao

Power crisis not artificial

WHY is it easy to cite article written by Ed Cabrera again titled "Only winners in Mindanao crisis are power firms...sober" (Inquirer, 3/5/12).

The Department of Energy (DOE) clarifies that the energy shortage in Mindanao is not artificial. Based on data submitted by the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines, the Mindanao grid has been experiencing low energy supply marked by "red alert" status.

A "red alert" means that there is no reserve therefore the grid's operations.

We stress that the solution for Mindanao requires the construction of base load generating capacities capable of producing power at any time of the day. We clarify that Department Circular No. 2012-03-0004 was issued to address the energy shortage in the Mindanao grid and deployment of all generating capacities.

We emphasize that Mindanao's energy consumption peaks during the evenings. Cheaper technology for power storage limits the maximum of 4 hour. We to address Mindanao's consumption needs, therefore, the DOE has to source power is higher than the rate of those generators.

The DOE has a comprehensive energy plan for Mindanao and is committed to ensure the implementation of the best possible solution to the Mindanao power scenario.

—JOSE RENE D. ALMENDRAS,
secretary, Department of Energy
info@doe.gov.ph

Opinion of 1,200 weightier than that of one man

IT WAS blasphemous and ridiculous of the Eighteen Tighas to liken former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Chief Justice Renato Corona to Jesus Christ in his column in red "The people cried, crucify him!" (Inquirer, 3/5/12). In the first place, Christ was the Son of God whereas only politicians were his contemporaries and his death sentence was carried out by among illegal wrath. Nor did he hold high public office. In John 18:36, he declares: "My kingdom is not of this world," Both Gloria and Corona are not only of this world but are a former ruler like Ferdinand Marcos, and the other a high magistrate, like Pontius Pilate.

Tighas smeared as a "mob" the people who in two opinion surveys overwhelmingly condemned Corona as "guilty" of the impeachment charges against him. I'm reminded of those who "mob" led by the Pharisees and had dozens who cried: "Crucify Him!" when Jesus was brought before them after his "trial" by Pontius Pilate. In his sermon offers to defend Corona, and also Gloria, whom he had served as chief of staff, Tighas reveals is like Pride's Pilate. In his sermon offers to defend Corona, and also Gloria, whom he had served as chief of staff, Tighas reveals is like Pride's Pilate. In his sermon offers to defend Corona, and also Gloria, whom he had served as chief of staff, Tighas reveals is like Pride's Pilate.

The statement was attributed by playwright Orestis Zozo to Dr. Peter Stockmann, the priest, pal character of his play "An Enemy of the People." "The decent majority has the right to rule," Dr. Stockmann was referring to the "unanimous majority" that the local baths, which attracted tourists income, was polluted by the town's tannery. In a famous diatribe often quoted by antiestablish and authoritarian rulers, Dr. Stockmann is asserted to declare, "A majority may be right; a majority is always wrong."

While Stockmann, a physician, was right about the baths, he was only half right in his general statement on democracy. Indeed, "a majority may be right." That is why in a modern democracy such as that largest we are assured by our Constitution, the right of the majority to speak and to be represented in people's congresses is recognized. But it certainly is not true that "the majority is always wrong."

It is also the rule in all democracies that "the will of the majority" is to be followed. Historically, society started being ruled by patriarchs, then by tribal chiefs, priests, a hereditary royalty, kings, oligarchs, dictators, and currently known as dictators. But in current eras they were more frequently wrong than right. And the people or the masses invariably suffered under their rule.

And as revolutions occurred. In modern times, some of the greatest are the revolutions that overthrew the British king; then the French Revolution that ousted the French monarchy and the feudal system; the Russian Revolution against the Tsar, and of course the Morale Revolution in China that led to that country's emergence from a century of near-poverty and foreign-imposed humiliation. There was also the Edsa revolution that ousted the dictator Marcos. The judgment of history is that these revolutions by the masses were right.

As Sir Winston Churchill famously quipped, "Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried..."

As for the surveys that Mr. Tighas mentioned as adverse, as it is said that the opinions of 1,200 respondents, if they represent a cross-section of the population is weightier than the opinion of one man, members of his family, cronies or servants, friends or appointees of the popular or democratic will is reversed.

Opinion surveys by reputable pollsters have generally turned out to be correct and reliable as to election results. The only notoriously wrong election poll was taken by an American survey firm in 1949 which wrongly predicted that President Truman had lost reelection, and that was more than fifty years ago.

—MANUEL LAURARI,
spokesman, Movement for Truth in History,
mlaurari@yahoo.com

Let the spirit of the law prevail in Corona's trial

SENATOR Ambal Tamlo Lacson is right in saying that the Senate should admit as evidence all the testimonies of witnesses and the documents on impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona's unexplained wealth.

Why should the senator-judges give any weight at all to the position of the defense panel that all evidence gathered from allegedly questionable sources should be deleted from the records? In the first place, it has not been proven that Corona's bank records are "fruits of the poisoned tree" and therefore inadmissible. How could the statements and documents presented by bank officers not cognizant of deeds be deemed inadmissible?

And even granting for the sake of argument that some documents, such as Corona's bank signatures, are of doubtful provenance, does that negate the fact that Corona kept unusually large bank deposits that he would not have earned from his lawful income of just over P600,000 per year? No sir.

It is very clear from the disclosures in the series of Corona-related investigative reports in the form of unidentified posts and senate projections and bank accounts. The law mandates that unexplained wealth should be forfeited in favor of the state because it is presumed to be ill-gotten.

The defense should refrain from using the law to obstruct justice. Filipinos should never act such attempt to subvert the rule of law through legal technicalities. The spirit of the law should prevail at all times. There's simply too much evidence against Corona to let him fly free away.

—EDGARDO CAYDO,
edgardo_sayson@yahoo.com

The Bedan Community congratulates San Beda College Manila – College of Law on the occasion of its

60th Commencement Exercises
on Saturday, 14 April 2012,
at the Abbey Church of Our Lady of Montserrat,
Mendiola, City of Manila

with His Excellency

FIDEL V. RAMOS
(Twelfth President of the
Republic of the Philippines)

as Commencement Speaker.

May the graduates of CLASS 2012 be inspired to surpass the top passing performance of 96.55% set by Class 2011 in the 2011 Bar Examinations, and live up to the Bedan tradition of being fully human, wholly Christian, truly Filipino, and globally competitive.

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BROTHER-SISTER TEAM: Pio and Alice Peter Cayetano

All in the family at Senate: Enriles, Angaras, etc.

From page A1

If Alliance (UNA) of Vice President Jejomar Binay could include Juan Ponce "Jack" Enrile Jr., Sen. Juan Pilip "Juan" Victor Ejercito and reelectionist Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano. Binay's daughter Nancy has already mentioned as a possible senatorial candidate under UNA.

Sotto, Pangilinan

Enrile is the son of Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, while Ejercito is the half-brother of Sen. Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada, the Senate President Pro Tempore.

Cayetano, the Senate minority leader, is the younger brother of Sen. Pia Cayetano who, like Enrile and Estrada, is on her second and final term.

Also at the tail-end of their terms are Senators Edgardo Angara and Manuel Villar Angara's son, Aurora Rep. Juan Edgardo Angara, and Villar's wife, Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, who said to be eyeing Senate seats next year.

Senate Majority Leader Vicente Sotto III and Sen. Francis Pangilinan are related by affinity as well. Pangilinan's wife Shalani Soledad is the niece of Sotto though Sotto's wife, Helen Sanchez, and Shalani are estranged.

Nothing wrong

Enrile's yesterday admonished the possibility of having relatives in the same chamber during the same term, but said there was nothing necessarily wrong with the arrangement.

Having a family member in the Senate had the "advantage" of having a "unified position" on issues or advocacies, he added.

Estrada had served with his brother, Sen. Emi. Lotta "Lito" Ejercito, during the 12th Congress from 2004 to 2007.

Ejercito ran and won in 2007, months after her husband, former President Joseph Estrada, was removed from office.

Estrada also downplayed the idea of a "political dynasty" despite having several relatives elected in the same chamber.

"You know, as long as you have the determination to serve our people and our country, no problem," he told the reporters in a phone interview.

Masses not dumb

By Estrada's reckoning, gone are the days when voters would go for a candidate simply because of popularity or name recall.

"People are more discerning, especially this season," he said. "They see things. They observe. They know who's working and who's not. They can't be fooled anymore."

Estrada said voters would also go by "track record and platform" in choosing their candidates for elective office. He dismissed the idea of dynasty, his half-brother, sadly, winning 4 terms and not one year based on his seeing this now at the forefront. "I will still depend on the voters. So far his ratings are high," he said.

Court finds Ecleo guilty of killing his wife

From page A1

town, the "supreme master" of the cult group Philippine Brotherhood Missionaries Association (PBMA) was also ordered to pay the heirs of his wife P45 million in compensatory damages, to represent what Alona would have earned had she been able to finish and practice medicine.

Alona, a fourth year medical student, was found by her father inside their home at Sitio Bayanihan, Barangay Guadalupe, Cebu City on July 5, 2002. Her body was found three days later inside a black garbage bag dumped in a ravine in Dalaguete town, southern Cebu.

Aside from the compensatory damages, Judge Soliver Peter of Regional Trial Court Branch 14 also told Ecleo to pay Alona's family P500,000 in moral damages, P500,000 in exemplary damages, P200,000 in attorney's fees and P50,000 in expenses of litigation.

Guilty of graft

Ecleo was represented by his lawyers Goldardo Edimangolor who said he didn't know when his client was in Cebu City to surrender himself on a P1-million bail in March 2004, after the court allowed him to seek medical treatment abroad. Edimangolor said his cardiologist had described him as a "walking time bomb" who could drop dead anytime due to probable cardiac complications.

Ecleo was facing a 10-year jail term after the Sandiganbayan found him guilty of two counts of graft during his stint as mayor of San Jose, Bongao Island, for overpaying for the construction of two municipal buildings and for spending public funds for a terminal's contract owned by his group, the PBMA.

Edimangolor said they would appeal the verdict before a higher court because there were issues raised by the defense that were not appreciated by the court. One of them was the testimony of Alona's friend. The defense contended that the woman found dead in Dalaguete was not Alona.

Alona's family members, who were all in black, cried after the verdict was handed down. "Finally, my sister received justice," said Alona's younger brother Andrei, one of the prosecution witnesses.

Andrei had testified that he found his sister sprawled on the right that she was killed, and that he later saw Ecleo's bodyguards carrying a garbage bag that they placed inside a vehicle.

Self-sacrifice

But for PBMA member Virgie Hermida, the court decision sadly reaffirmed their master's mission, to sacrifice himself as their organization would be known worldwide.

"Our organization would not have been known if this shilling didn't happen," she said.

The promulgation capped a 10-year trial that was marked by the withdrawal of six judges handling the case. Judge Peter was the seventh judge to handle the Ecleo parricide case.

Security was tight at the Palace of Justice and only a limited number of people were allowed inside the courtroom. Around 30 members of Ecleo's family refused to be addressed only 20 representatives each.

More than 50 policemen were deployed to prevent any untoward incident from happening.

THE VICTIM: Ruben Ecleo and wife Alona

Ecleo's lawyers, however, were not in court when the verdict was handed down. Finally, no relatives showed up there," said Alona's younger brother Andrei, one of the prosecution witnesses.

Andrei had testified that he found his sister sprawled on the right that she was killed, and that he later saw Ecleo's bodyguards carrying a garbage bag that they placed inside a vehicle.

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SPIN.ph

Llamados push Kings to the edge

By Mhaeng S. Castillo

TIM COONE asked his boys to give him something special last night and, surely enough, the champions boss got what he wanted from his Talkntext B-Meg squad.

Told the players Coone after the game: today that it takes a special effort to go 2-0 up," Coone said proudly after his Llamados withstood a hard-fighting Barangay Ginebra side, 85-77, to move within another victory of bagging was the PBA Commissioner's Cup Finals.

"There were times that I thought we were losing it," he continued. "But this team has toughened up mentally. I just felt we just up a special effort tonight."

Special it certainly was as the Llamados held the Kings scoreless for all but the final 1.3 seconds of the last 2:49 to break free from a 75-all game and carve out the win before close to 12,000 boisterous Smart Araneta Coliseum fans.

Peter June Simon, all-in-all as James Yap's chief back-up who has won numerous games for the Llamados, scored the last eight points in the final 3:02 as B-Meg gave for a win tomorrow that would send the 22nd title series since of the franchise.

Defending champion Talk N Text, meanwhile, draws for a second straight win and a 2-1 lead over Barako Bull when their series resumes today at 7:30 p.m. sites at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay.

Simon finished with 13 points in just 26 minutes, and import Dennis Bowden had the most assignment with 21 rebounds, 15 boards and five assists to complement Gladstone counterpart Jackson Vroman for the second straight game.

And history certainly leaves B-Meg, with 26 of the 39 teams to ever have taken a 2-0 lead in a best-of-five series going on to win. The Llamados take the first of their maiden duty have maneuvers at 6 p.m.

"Obviously, we will go for it," Coone, the 12-time champion coach who proved ruthless even of a fifth title series wins, said of the potential clincher tomorrow. "But it would be a special effort from two, knowing the character of Ginebra."

The game, as to the series-opener, was a defensive struggle, with both squads being held to dry spells.

B-Meg had its drought—2:02 to be exact—at the fourth period as the Kings rallied from a 68-73 deficit to forge their 75-all tie.

Mike Cardona hit three straight free throws off a Sheriff foul with 2:49 left before Ginebra took its turn on being starved by the B-Meg defense.

Vroman, a certified hard-worker who is suffering a crippled ankle suffered, duly struggled to put up 13 rebounds that went with 11 boards and four blocks.

Ginebra (85): Ayaay 12, Ilagan 12, Cabagnot 2, Slaughter 11, Vroman 13,

Obiena tabs pole vault silver medal

By Marc Anthony Reyes

EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD Kaeser Aldon Obiena fortified his chances of making the combined team when he salvaged a silver medal in the recent 2012 Taiwan International indoor pole vault championships.

A several grassroots athlete who is the son of former national team member Erasmon Obiena, he cleared the bar at 4.51 meters to place second in the 11-man junior contest tabbed by Malaysia's Mohd Mehamed after bumped 4.61 m.

His performance boosted the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association's development pool, which is already being primed up for next year's Southeast Asian Games in Myanmar.

It also ended the Filipino trackmen' medal drought this year after four international tournaments.

Filipino Jerome Mangallo posted 4.30m for fifth place in men's category. Women's entry Hazel Buenaventura also placed fifth in her division with a 3.40m effort.

The older Obiena served as their coach.

"These are very young kids with very good potential, we are just starting to give them exposure so they will be ready in the next few years," said Finals president Go Teng Kok.

LOS Angeles Clippers forward Blake Griffin slams one home against the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Bulls turn off Heat in OT

CHICAGO—The Bulls got key contributions from their reserves, with CJ Watson knocking down a game-tying three-pointer at the end of regulation to lead Chicago's 96-86 overtime victory over the Miami Heat in Thursday's classic clash of NBA divisional leaders.

Carlos Boozer led the Bulls with 19 points and Watson had 16 for the Bulls, who outscored Miami 12-6 in overtime to boost their lead to the Eastern Conference to four games.

LeBron James scored 30 points for Miami, but missed a free throw that would have made it a two-possession game late in regulation.

A confiding Derrick Rose scored a career-low two points on one-for-13 shooting and did not feature late in the fourth quarter or in overtime but the Bulls still seized a four-game lead over Miami with just seven games to play.

Dwyane Wade had 21 but the Heat could not take advantage of Chicago's 145-141 playing with a vulnerable Rose.

The reigning MVP has played in just two of Chicago's last 15 games due to injury and clearly he has days off has left him a step slow.

"I'm not worried about my game. I'm just trying to get my rhythm to get ready for the playoffs, get my timing back," Rose told reporters. "My shots were not falling, but my teammates had my back."

Chicago got 47 points from its reserves, including Watson's clutch trey.

"I tried to make a play on [the shot], going from guarding Michael Hamilton to one scoring" said Wade. "He made a tough shot. We never recovered from that shot."

Wade missed a potential game-winner at the end of regulation and the visitors managed just two points in a crippled overtime.

In San Antonio, Tim Duncan had 28 points and 12 rebounds as the Spurs broke out of a three-game skid and held off the surging Memphis Grizzlies, 109-97.

Manu Ginobili added 20 points for the Spurs, who responded to being beaten heavily by the Kobe Bryant-led Los Angeles Lakers in their previous game.

Memphis fell 11½ games behind the Los Angeles Clippers for the No. 4 playoff seed after the latter stripped the Minnesota Timberwolves, 99-82, in another game.

Blake Griffin had 30 points and 15 rebounds in lead Los Angeles. AP, Reuters

STAT BOX/TEAM STATS: Bulls (96) Boozer 7-12 19, Rose 1-13 2, Deng 5-13 12, Noah 3-7 6, Gibson 3-6 7, Watson 6-12 16, Hinrich 3-8 7, Brewer 1-3 3, Bogans 0-0 0, Asik 0-0 0, Hamilton 1-2 2, Teague 1-3 2, Johnson 1-2 2, Totals 32-81 86. Heat (86) James 11-23 30, Bosh 5-11 10, Wade 8-20 21, Battier 1-4 3, Miller 1-3 3, Chalmers 2-5 5, Haslem 2-3 4, Anthony 0-0 0, Cole 0-0 0, Howard 1-1 2, Jones 0-0 0, Ilgauskas 0-0 0, Andersen 0-0 0, Totals 31-73 86.

Abdon, Gandiongco set PH Am semifinal duel

By Pluvang R. Castillo

TRICE MARTINEZ, Cavite—Top-seeded Jik-Jik Abdon enjoyed another win of a return trip to the Philippine Amateur Closed golf championships final match yesterday after beating two considerable aces at challenging Sherwood Hills here.

The long-hitting 30-year-old, a business management major at Southville International, first drove 69th Cabillo the done, 3&2, before handling out obscure Jesse Mesa, 4&3 in the afternoon.

Those victories set up Abdon for a return match with the dangerous Sto. Gandiongco, the Cebu native who also posted a pair of authoritative wins in the event serving as the third leg of the Globe PGMF Circuit.

Gandiongco, who helped power Cebu Country Club to its first-ever PAL Interclub title in Davao last February, hastily broke up a tense in serving Baron Roque, 4&3, before being pushed to the limit in a 1-up victory over Bacolod's Diego Ordoy.

Jesse Aurino, the No. 2 seeds seed, also made it to the quarterfinals after a 1-0 victory over Dino Bell in the morning and a hard-earned 1-up win over the veteran, Lawrence Celestino.

Arden Baldatta, one of the more exciting talents to come out of the Juniors' ranks, also took a seat in the semifinals and will clash with Austria after 1-up victory over Joey Hernia that he followed up with a 3&2 triumph over Reynaro Arevalla.

"It will be a very interesting match today's," Abdon, who ousted Gandiongco also in the PAL final last year, told the Inquirer. "But you can never really assess your chances in match play.

"A lot of things can happen," concluded Abdon, who last, 3&2 in last year's final to the prize-mired Rupert Enriquez.

Abdon actually lost the opening hole against Mesa, but won the third, the sixth and three straight from the ninth to take a 4-up lead that his the never came close to overcoming the rest of the way.

Winner's top seed Jerry Arillos also breezed through her opening match against Eva Hilbosa, 4&2 to forge an interesting showdown with ICTSI teammate Carolyn Galapate in the event also backed by Pancake House, Golf Depot, Sunbrae Properties Inc., Asphil Express, Tabios Empire Golf and official hotel Microtel Suites.

Galapate, who won the stroke play event of the PH Amateur January topped Rainelda Reyes in the second round while Arillos a spot in the semis, while Sunshine Bernardo and Joyce Aguio battle-out for a pair of easy wins to seal their places in the other half of the draw.

No. 2 Banquiet ran into unchallenged in a 7&6 win over Jan Perenino, while the comebacking Agoja, seeded third, defeated Apple Rochelle, 4&2.

Agui kids eye Interclub sweep

TEAM Aguinaldo pressed to bid for a sweep by holding on to the lead in Division 1 and 2 and pulling away in Division 3 after the second round of the ICTSI Asegaff Interclub golf tournament at the Mihi course of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Tiva, Trias, Cavite.

Aguinaldo 1 aggregated 151 for the second straight to widen its lead to nine over-third squad Aguinaldo 2 with a 302 total in Division 1 and also had the same advantage over Division 1 in Division 2 after posting a 156 for 298.

It was all-over but the shouting for Aguinaldo, however, in Division 3 where it finished in a commanding 15-stroke margin over Navy 1.

Marco Pagbinigaran fired 72 points, Albert Gamido had 38 and Aris Mato dropped in 49 for the Aguinaldo team in Division 1 of the fourball, the second leg of the Asegaff golf summer circuit backed chiefly by ICTSI and also supported by Pancake House, Twinjuki Ring Kimlim Pepper, PAL, Busy Fete Philippines, McDonald's, Golf Depot, Pinoy Home Improvement, Burlington, Jollibee Marketing, Interstar Golf and Bobcad.

Aristotle Arevalo (34), Wilfredo Gao (33) and Yuko Imai (49) delivered the big points in Division 2 for Aguinaldo while Leandro Bagtas (40), Aron Granada (46) and Anton Rosales (23) earned the scoring honors for their team in Division 3.

'Bullang-Bullang' fires off today

DRAWING support from 32 gamefowl breeders groups across the country, the NPGB Bullang Bullang 8-Derby Derby goes full blast today in four venues.

Main-sided breeder Sonny Lagos will host the eliminations at Nemanic Coliseum in Laguna, Rihel Du at Tarlac and Jimmy Elemental Cockpit in Bohol and Jun Badana at Octagon Coliseum in Butuan City.

All four pointers in the eliminations will share in the P1-million cash prize.

The total guaranteed prize is P30-million, said National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders executive director Ariel Amusategui.

Eliminations are set on Apr. 15 at Team Cockpit Arena and SIBAA Complex and on Apr. 16 at San Jose Mega Cockpit, Armstrong Coliseum, San Pedro Coliseum and Daniel Sports Center. On April 20, eliminations are slated at Visayas Sports Coliseum, Team Arena, Medina Coliseum and Tubson Sports Club.

Fights will be held in the following venues on Apr. 20: Iloilo Coliseum, Basic Cockpit, Santiago Cockpit and Molmen Arena.

Mango Man Triathlon tomorrow

THE PROVINCE of Batangas, known for its succulent mangoes, celebrates its "6th Mangga-han Festival 2012 with 1st Mango Man Triathlon tomorrow.

The event will be part of an entire colorful package of sports and entertainment festivities.

The triathlon will be contested over 1 kilometer of swimming, 42k on the bike and 10k of running—the Olympic standards for the sport.

Solo and relay categories and will be held in the race at the Bayview Beach.

The festival officially opens on Monday.

For inquiries, call Jocelyn Taraboso at (043) 2510380 or (0933) 2574134.

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Empire East

Aplus METRO
Editor Joseph Voltaire L. Contreras

Graft charge junked vs Pasay mayor

10 other city officials cleared by Ombudsman for garbage contract

By Miko Morales

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman has dismissed a graft complaint against Pasay Mayor Antonino Calixto and 10 other city officials for allegedly entering into anomalous garbage contracts six years ago.

In her resolution under Ombudsman Graft Investigation and Prosecution Officer II Cyrille Cupin-Morales cleared Calixto, who is now the mayor, who also headed the city council, for passing a series of council resolutions that allowed his predecessor, Mayor Wenceslao "Bravo" Trinidad to extend the contracts of garbage contractors they allegedly favored.

Apart from Calixto and Trinidad, Councilors Richard Advincula, Lenny Ibay, Jose Antonio Rosete, Ma. Antonia Cancio, Noel Bunsoy, Arnel Regino Arceo, Edelbe Vergel de Dios, Rhoda Ilin Pineda and Greg Pastor Jr. were also included in the charge that has been dropped.

Citing the prosecution's failure to build a firm case against the city officials, highlighted by the flip-flopping of one of the accused who allowed to become state witness, the case against them "would be an exercise in futility" said Morales.

In the order, the Ombudsman took note of the fact that the alleged testimony against Calixto and the other officials relied solely on the testimonies of Councilor Antonio Tuanda and his husband Genaro, which were "patently bereft of independent corroboration from some other sources."

Morales also cited the fact that Governor Caneta had been previously convicted in a multi-million case, diminishing his credibility as a witness.

Calixto said it was clear from the very beginning that there was a political motive in the filing of the case, which the Binay-backers also cited in the order.

In 2006, Antonio Cancio originally admitted in "Trinidad (for) Congress" Dy and her husband Joey threatened to revive the malversation case against Governor if the couple filed themselves with the senate.

Calixto said he was hopeful that the city could finally move forward with more pressing matters with the case off their backs.

"We already suffered for something we did not do," the mayor told reporters, referring to the suspension the town-hit department ranked on them in 2008.

Asked if the city planned to pursue legal action against those who filed the complaint, the mayor said he did not even let his mind. What was important for him now was to buckle down to work, he said.

"At some point, we have to stop that kind of culture from developing. Filing cases against your political opponents are merely dirty tricks of politicians," Calixto said.

'Gun found in Ivler's house same one used in Ebarle shooting'

By John Paul Aurelio

PROSECUTORS are claiming that a gun recovered from Marlon Aguilar's house where Ivler was, could sign suspect Jason Ivler, died it out with firearms was the same one used in the shooting of the son of a former Malabon City official in 2009.

Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Anthony Fadullon asked a Quezon City court to summon Senior Manager of the Firearms Investigation Division in Camp Crame, who conducted tests on the cal. 45 pistol seized from Aguilar's house in 2010, to appear in court.

"The police were able to recover rings from the body of the victim," Ramon Ebarle in The Hague that the MR got from the vehicle matched the gun seized from the Aguilar house.

The court set the next hearing for April 27 after an MR agent failed to show up and testify against Ivler.

Apart from Mamaspas, also set to testify for the prosecution is MR special agent Emmanuel Lapus, who was among those who joined the raid on Aguilar's house that led to the arrest of the accused.

Ivler is facing a murder charge for allegedly shooting Ebarle in a road rage incident along Santolan Road on the night of Nov. 14.

Ebarle was on a Toyota Land Cruiser while Ivler rode a Honda CRV with a diplomatic plate eventually forced to his stepbrother, Stephen Pollard, during the incident.

Ivler was eventually arrested after he was wounded in a gun battle with MR agents at his mother's house on Jan. 10, 2011.

The suspect is now detained at the Special Intensive Care Unit of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT
Parade participants practice their dance steps for the Ahtoan Festival tomorrow at the Cultural Center of the Philippines complex in Pasay City. ARMIE MACAS

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Malabon police initiate probe on owner of gun that killed boy

By Nina Calleja

THE POLICE are investigating who should be held responsible in an incident where a 10-year-old boy allegedly shot dead his playmate on Monday in Malabon City.

Mark Zander Ala, 7, was playing with children in his neighborhood on Dicto Road, Barangay Potrero in Malabon City on Monday around 5 p.m. when he was shot dead.

According to a television interview of the victim's father, the suspect is a 10-year-old neighbor who was allegedly asked when he was out able to recover a week operation posed by Ala.

Whenever said the boy had returned to their house and came back with a gun.

"Who owns the gun and how the boy got hold of it are the subject of an investigation. We are still waiting for the results of the ballistic examination based on the spent shell recovered at the scene of the crime," said Senior Supt. Ferdinand Angeli, Malabon police chief.

Angeli said they could not arrest the child under the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, which exempts those aged 15 and below from criminal liability.

"We are not decisive to know what can be the mind of the 10-year-old boy that we have asked the staff of the local DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development) to counsel this (boy) who was traumatized by the incident," he said in a phone interview.

Supt. Ferdinand del Rosario, public information officer of the Northern Police District said they are still checking if the father that hit the victim, Malabon Bar service lineman of a Caloocan police officer, reportedly a grandfather of the suspect.

The police, however, refused to identify the policeman since the investigation is still ongoing.

St. Scholastica's Sister Mary John goes to Washington

By Paol Sario
Cnet Buzor

SISTER Mary John Mananzan, named one of the Top 100 Most Inspiring People in the World, at the Second World Conference of Women's Mothers Network to end domestic violence.

WHAT do Hollywood actress Irene Widespoon and the president of a progressive feminist Asian-me school in Manila have in common?

Both are staunch advocates of women's rights, that's what.

The two women, outstanding in their own fields, joined over 1,000 delegates from all over the world in Washington, D.C. from Feb. 27 to March 1 for the 2nd World Conference of Women's Mothers' Network to End Violence in mind. To end domestic violence against women.

Of this large delegation, only one Filipino came all the way from the Philippines. Sister Mary John Mananzan, named one of the 100 Most Inspiring People in the World, was sent by Irene Philippines to attend the four-day conference on behalf of one of her many women's advocacy groups, the Women's Crisis Center (WCC).

Sister is the world's most recognized public figures and personalities, including former US President Bill Clinton and his wife, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, as well as Hollywood celebrity and Avon Global Ambassador Irene Witherspoon, attended the conference. Witherspoon is also the honorary chairman of the Avon Foundation for Women.

Breakout sessions

Aimed at encouraging individuals to be activists and advocates in the global fight against injustice, slavery and violence against women, the gathering featured breakout sessions that discussed specific and relevant topics.

One of the sessions that was of special interest to Sister Mary John centered on the topic of men being involved in the fight against violence towards women, etc. During this session, she met Hollywood actor Vinne Rhees, whose mother and siblings were physically abused by his father.

"Stopping violence is not just a problem for women, but a family issue," Sister Mary John pointed out. "It is never enough for men to just understand what's happening; they must be advocates, too, because the issue affects every member of the family."

Overall, the Benedictine sister also realized one important, and troubling fact: While there are existing laws that talk about protection from domestic violence, these are not as well-defined, thus making implementation a challenging task.

In the Philippines, yes a bigger concern is the general lack of awareness of such a law, she said. "What we lack is consciousness, and more importantly, volition. Here we have RA 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children act, but many do not know about it and what it means."

Likewise, many Filipino children are victims of gender archetypes and conditioning, leading them to believe that men are superior to women. "Just look at the number of rape cases reported in the Philippines and analyze the data. Most of the rapists, sister, allows law to be directly involved in domestic violence matters.

WCC is one of four partner NGOs for Aren't I Speak Out Against Domestic Violence initiative. The campaign raises funds to help sustain the partner NGOs' hotline numbers from which the public can reach out about their domestic violence issues.

Taking off from what she learned from the Washington conference, the indefatigable violence advocate also has plans to set up an organization of men who will champion the cause, thus encouraging Filipino men to take a more proactive role in the war against violence. "The family must and the men—into action," she said.

Apart from empowering women with meaningful earning opportunities and quality literacy products, there is a leading need to educate men and boys about violence, she said. "The world's largest direct seller is also the largest corporate supporter of programs on breast cancer awareness.

Avon also announced it reached the new milestone of more than $700 million raised and awarded worldwide for cancer in care and finding a cure for breast cancer, one of the leading causes of cancer death among women of all races.

Lawyers of Manalo couple agree on status quo

By Julie M. Aurelio

LAWYERS of the petitioner of GMA 7's upcoming show "Pat Bolinao" and of the wife of TV host Jose Manalo have agreed to maintain a status quo since she has repeatedly stopped getting in touch with her husband since January.

John Cabanos, counsel of Television and Production Exposition Inc. (Tape), and Lowell John Peñaseta, defendant Anna Lyn Manalo's lawyer, made the agreement during a hearing at the sala of Judge Luis Cesar Maceren of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 216.

In shorter the proceedings, Cabanos said they were unable to maintain a status quo provided that Manalo refrains from approaching her husband.

'No hard'

Peñaseta first asked the court to deny a request for a temporary restraining order (TRO), claiming that TAPE's allegations had no basis since his client did not invite "any set of documents" against her husband, a host of "Eat Bulaga."

"Since January, the defendant has indicated from proceeding in the workplace of the plaintiff. There's no need for a TRO, there is no urgency it will be absurd to issue [such] order since she did not do anything. There is no issue here, no need for a TRO," the defendant's lawyer said in court.

But Cabanos said it should not be an order denying the TRO, as it will only be a status quo since there's nothing that prevents Anna Lyn from approaching her husband.

The lawyer added that since Divinaa has vouched for his client, it is better to maintain the status quo to eliminate the proceedings.

The court will proceed to hear the prayer for the issuance of an injunction and the damages sought by TAPE.

Anna Lyn, however, was told to submit in 15 days her answer to the complaint filed against her before the court sets the hearing on the injunction.

TAPE, which produces "Eat Bulaga," earlier filed a 23-page petition for injunction and damages against Jose's wife for allegedly harassing him at work since November 2011.

How to deal with abusive cops

ON TARGET
Alvarez Tuplo

THE DISMISSAL of two Manila policemen who robbed P225,000 from two Koreans is praiseworthy.

This is probably the first time that somebody who maltreated an investigation were meted out a penalty of summary dismissal.

The robbery took place at Malate district's tourist belt on Black Saturday (April 7).

It took less than one week for the authorities to decide on the fate of the two cops, PO2 Bernaldo Galfer Ubina and PO1 Vincent Ubaldo Abolina, both from Station 9's mobile patrol.

Normally, summary dismissal proceedings take months and sometimes.

Business moves short. So here can you call a hearing that takes months and years to finish: summary or short?

* * *

As I said in the April 10 "On Target" column, civil service order favor abusive and corrupt policemen facing criminal and administrative charges.

A cop can't be dismissed outright even if he openly committed a grave offense because he has to go through the rigmarole of "due process" where his rights are heard.

Due process can drive the trial forces respondent cops who, through their lawyers, ask for hearing postponements many times.

Such postponements and delays in the trial make complainants lose interest in pursuing their complaints against the respondents.

Because the complainants no longer attend hearings, criminal or administrative cases against the respondent police officers are dismissed.

And so, abusive or corrupt policemen go on with their nefarious activities.

* * *

For a policeman to think twice before committing grave abuse of authority, the Secretary of Justice should constantly remind him: While there are existing laws that talk about protection from domestic violence, these are not as well-defined, thus making implementation a challenging task.

In the Philippines, yes a bigger concern is the general lack of awareness of such a law, she said. "What we lack is consciousness, and more importantly, volition. Here we have RA 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children act, but many do not know about it and what it means."

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METROBRIEFS

'Batanding' watch

THE PHILIPPINE Coast Guard (PCG) has requested fishermen and divers with an Manila Bay to report any sighting of the injured batanding (whale shark) that appeared off Pilaw Basketball in Manila on Thursday afternoon. The batanding that appeared in sight last Saturday and is currently below the arrival of marine biologists and veterinarians from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) who were supposed to tend to the wounded fish fin. "As of this time, there have not yet been sightings of the distressing, but we advised the fishermen and vessels in the vicinity to immediately inform the coast guard if they sighted it," PCG spokesperson Lt. Cmdr. Armi Balcombe said yesterday. Lt. Cmdr. Rolan de Guzman, PCG joint task control officer, who led a team of coast guard divers and representatives group embarked by the area, said the fish had a 10-inch long and two-inch-deep laceration on its back that seemed to have disturbed the back fin. The distressing mammal is believed to have been subjected to by BFAR experts to be 20 to years old. Jeanna Sang

Hose on fire sparks fuel tank fire; 2 hurt

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE SUMMER heat could have caused a portion of a fuel tanker to spew flames, resulting in injuries to two men who were loading gasoline in the vehicle before noon yesterday in Quezon City.

SFO2 Fortunato Aldo of the Quezon City Police District said the incident occurred at around 11:45 a.m. at City Hall station along Amoranto Avenue.

"The truck was being loaded with gasoline when the hose suddenly burst into flames. We believe the heat of the sun at that time could have triggered a reaction on the oil and started a fire," Aldo said.

The truck driver, Eddie Maguda, 42, and his helper, Jovanie Siena, 24, were injured in the incident.

Both are employees of SMC Development Company.

Aldo said the tanker was loaded with 1,000 liters of gasoline at the time of the incident.

He added that the quick response of fire fighters prevented the fire from spreading.

"The fire was put out after a few minutes, thereby preventing an explosion," Aldo said.

UN Council demands a stop to Sudan, South Sudan clashes

UNITED NATIONS—The UN Security Council demanded on Thursday that Sudan and South Sudan stop border clashes which it said threatened to return the war-torn neighbors to a full-scale war.

A statement from the 15-nation body also insisted that Khartoum stop air strikes and Juba withdraw troops from a strip of land.

Fighting along the 1,800-kilometer border between the former civil war foes has led to a standoff over Sudan's Heglig oil field after it was seized on Tuesday by troops from South Sudan, which declared independence last year.

Diverse issues deep between the neighbors, who are still haggling over the ownership of Heglig, including the land-locked south should pay to transport its oil through Sudan, and the division of national debt among other issues.

"The recent violence threatens to return both countries to full-scale war and the spread of tragic loss of life and suffering, destroyed infrastructure, and economic devastation, which they have worked so hard and long to overcome," a statement from the Security Council said.

"The Security Council demands a complete, immediate, and unconditional end to all fighting, withdrawal of (South Sudan's army) from Heglig, and to (Sudanese armed Forces) aerial bombardments, and to cooperation by both sides to peacefully resolve between Sudan and South Sudan, and second to support by both sides to peaceful co-existence between the two countries," it said.

The Council demanded that both countries complete their force withdrawals promptly, and

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Greco

British PM makes historic visit to Burma

NAYPYIDAW—British Prime Minister David Cameron met Burma's (Myanmar's) president on Friday on the first visit in decades by a Western leader to the former pariah state, as world powers consider lifting sanctions.

Former Gen. Thein Sein hailed the summit as "historic" as he welcomed Cameron to his official residence in the region's showpiece capital Naypyidaw, according to an AFP reporter.

The British premier was also due to meet opposition leader Aung Suu Kyi in Rangoon (Yangon) during the one-day visit, which follows the end of nearly half a century of outright military rule last year.

Britain—Burma's former colonial ruler—has traditionally taken a hardline stance on sanctions because of human rights concerns, but it has recently shown signs of softening its position.

"Where reform is beginning, like in Burma, we must get behind it," Cameron told reporters in London ahead of his trip.

"I believe we should be the first serving British prime minister to visit Burma, which won independence in 1948.

After one-on-one talks, much on the release of political prisoners and by-elections this month that gave the Nobel Peace laureate her first-ever seat in parliament.

"And let us show that when there have been the courage to reform, we have the courage to respond," Cameron added.

A steady stream of foreign dignitaries, including US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and British Foreign Secretary William Hague, have visited Burma since a new quasi-civilian government took power last year.

But Cameron is the first Western head of government to go there since the military seized power in 1962, ushering in almost half a century of repressive junta rule and isolation from the West.

He is believed to be the first serving British prime minister to visit Burma, which won independence in 1948.

After one-on-one talks, Cameron was due to have lunch with Thein Sein, before travelling to the former capital Rangoon for talks with Suu Kyi, whose years-long house arrest by the junta's rulers locked up at the hands of the former junta.

The veteran dissident holds huge influence in the United States and Europe, particularly London, and a move to sanctions would almost certainly need her support.

The 27-nation European Union already lifted some restrictions against the regime this year and foreign ministers will decide the next steps when they meet on April 23.

If Burma can persuade Cameron that reforms will continue, the EU could agree to a "substantial relaxation of measures," said Derek Vrolijk, a former Dutch ambassador to Thailand and an advocate of engagement with Naypyidaw.

He added, however, that the impact of EU sanctions had been limited and moves to end the stigma of doing business in Burma could be more significant.

"I think as far as most people are concerned, they would like the disengagement of trade, investment and tourism—which has been the particular British hallmark—to stop so that (US Ambassador) Chartered, HSBC, Shell and BP and other British companies (can) go in," Brinkley said.

In February, the European Union lifted a travel ban on 87 Burma officials, including Thein Sein, but kept an assets freeze against them.

Other sanctions include an arms embargo, a ban on gems and an assets freeze on nearly 3000 people and 800 entities.

Foreign ministers from the G-8 world powers—Russia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States—on Thursday welcomed "significant steps" by Burma toward democratic reforms.

"The ministers will consider the easing of sanctions to help this country's troubled reform and fully integrate into international and regional political and economic processes," they said in a final statement after talks in Washington. AFP

BRITISH Prime Minister David Cameron (left) listens to Burma's President Thein Sein during their meeting at the President's Office in Naypyidaw on April 13. AFP/EPA

Interim president sworn in 22 days after coup in Mali

BAMAKO, MALI—Twenty-two days after a military coup ended more than two decades of peaceful democratic rule in Mali, the leader of the country's national assembly was sworn in as interim president on Thursday.

The official, Dioncounda Traore, a 70-year-old labor union activist who had been jailed in Mali's earlier struggle against dictatorship, will lead a temporary government that aims to organize new elections within 40 days and guide the country back to constitutional rule.

But he must also face the challenge of reuniting a country torn in two. During the chaos of the coup, an opportunistic uprising by Tuareg militiamen in the north seized strategic towns and declared an independent nation.

"Mali has never experienced such difficult times," Traore said in remarks after he was sworn in. "In very extreme circumstances, a nation can make."

He called upon the Tuareg rebels to leave the areas they occupy immediately or face "total and relentless war."

Ecowas, the West African trade bloc that pressured the coup leaders to relinquish power by closing borders with Mali and freezing its bank accounts, has said it is also busy drawing up plans to help oust the rebellion in the north. The coup had been considered a serious setback for democracy in Africa. The country was little more than a month away from holding elections to replace its president, Amadou Toumani Toure, who had suffered to the nation's consternation by stepping down after his term had run its course.

There, for a surprise derailment of the democratic process, a group of junior officers deposed him, contending that he had been too weak in confronting the uprising in the north. In the ensuing confusion, however, the northern rebels rapidly advanced, taking control of Timbuktu and declaring their own nation, Azawad.

The leader of the junta, a US-trained Army captain, was reduced to begging for foreign help to defeat the rebels. Late Friday, the junta agreed to step down to ensure the amnesty.

The speedy, diplomatic resolution of the coup stood in stark contrast to the case of Ivory Coast, where months of international condemnation and sanctions failed to dislodge the nation's strongman, Laurent Gbagbo, after he lost an election.

In that case, it took an onslaught by rival forces and air strikes by the United Nations and France before Gbagbo surrendered last week. Traore has been jailed, however, since very shortly after elections were imposed.

Still, the situation in northern Mali continues to be grave. The UN commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, said on Thursday that steps must be taken to protect civilians there.

"Reports from the north of the country remain grim. Civilians have been killed, raped and forced to flee," Pillay said. "It is difficult at this point to be sure of the scale of the human rights violations taking place, but in addition to preying on individuals, a variety of different rebel groups have been accused of looting private and public property, including hospitals and healthcare facilities." AFP/YSU

TUAREG losing no arm in...

Egypt in tough final leg of transition

By Tom Perry

CAIRO—The final leg of Egypt's transition from military to civilian rule has turned into a bitter power struggle that is feeding a season of crisis and confusion among Egyptians, who fear their democratic dream could be an risk.

Just weeks before a presidential election in May, divisions are hardening in a nation polarized by the rise of Islamist groups that were banned under Hosni Mubarak and arrayed by members of his administration to reassert influence.

The struggle for control of Egypt that began in the uneven last year has moved to the courts and the Islamist-controlled parliament. How the next few weeks proceed will determine the course of political change that will influence the whole region.

"There is some serious game-playing going on. The military never handed over the baton," said a foreign diplomat, working in Cairo. "I don't think anyone could say it is going smoothly...We've had these kind of crunch points before...but each time they've managed to pull it back."

The web of rivalries between Islamists, generals and supporters of Mubarak's old guard has thrown up big challenges for a process that has been far from easy and is being further muddied by a spate of politically driven legal battles that have halted work on a new constitution and thrown into doubt the candidacies of several presidential front-runners.

On Thursday the Muslim Brotherhood and other lawmakers feared their counsels in parliament, passing a law preventing top officials who served under Mubarak from becoming presidents.

This would prevent former Vice President Omar Suleiman and Mubarak's last premier, Ahmed Shafiq, from running. However, the legislation is unlikely to win the approval of the ruling military council, which is customary for it to come into force.

The political heat is not in the air there on Friday as the Muslim Brotherhood heads back to Tahrir Square, the cradle of the revolt against Mubarak, for a protest also aimed at stopping Suleiman from contesting the vote that starts in May.

The last-minute candidacy of Suleiman, a former spy chief, has unnerved secular-minded reformists as well as the Islamists.

Both worry that as Suleiman prepares a run, Egypt's military rulers are showing no hunger for democracy in the Arab world's most populous nation.

While his critics say Suleiman could only win through subterfuge, his candidacy appears to have struck a chord with many alarmed at the rise of Islamist influence and who see him as a strong man in the Nasser mold who can restore order

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BUSINESS

Gov't debt rose to ₱4.99T in January

Year-on-year increase of 5.3% or P252.6B

By Norvel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT'S debt stock rose to P4.99 trillion as of January, increasing by P42.1 billion or 0.9 percent from the December as the state incurred more new obligations than what it settled, according to the Bureau of the Treasury.

The amount of outstanding obligations as of the end of January was also 5.3 percent or P252.6 billion higher than the level posted in the same month of 2011.

With the population estimated to have reached 96 million in 2011, the amount of total outstanding debt would mean that each citizen has a share of P52,015.

Data on total outstanding debt from the treasury bureau showed that 86 percent or P3.08 trillion was borrowed from domestic lenders.

The local debt increased by P4 billion or 0.1 percent from P3.07 trillion posted in December. The increase was attributed to the government having redeemed more maturing securities compared to new issues.

On the other hand, 42 percent or P1.12 trillion of the total outstanding debt was booked in foreign currencies such as the US dollar as well as the euro and yen.

Foreign borrowing increased by P58.1 billion or 1.8 percent from the P3.18 trillion owed to overseas lenders in December.

The increase in foreign debt was due mainly to a net availment of P61.26 billion—which meant that new loans that the government incurred were higher by that amount compared to the payments it made.

The appreciation of the yen and the euro against the dollar also added P3.9 billion to the debt stock. On the other hand, the redenomination of some of the country's foreign debt shaved off P6.64 billion to the aforementioned obligations.

In January, government debt paper—pegged in dollars—amounted to an equivalent of P1.26 trillion while yen and euro loans stood at P80.5 billion and P28.2 billion, respectively.

The government's total contingent debt—composed mainly of sovereign guarantees—went down by P6.4 billion or 1.6 percent to P389 billion.

In March, Finance Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said that the debt stock—when compared to the size of the economy or gross domestic product—settled at 2010 percent as of the end of 2011.

Purisima said this was the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the past 15 years or since 1998, when it was at 48.1 percent.

Double-digit bank lending growth to continue

By Michelle V. Baron

THE BSP/ICI forecast of Filipinos express bank lending to sustain a double-digit growth this year on the back of low interest rates that are seen to drive appetite for credit.

The BSP said banks would remain keen on extending more loans both to individual and corporate borrowers given their significant liquidity.

A robust increase in bank lending this year, in turn, is seen to aid efforts to boost growth of the economy following a sharp slowdown last year.

"Steady growth and adequate liquidity are sources support the domestic economy in the midst of uncertain global economic prospects," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

He made the statement as the BSP released a report saying that outstanding loans from universal and commercial banks as of end-February grew 18 percent to P2.78 trillion from P2.34 trillion as of the same period last year.

The increase was seen both in terms of loans to individual and corporate borrowers, the BSP said.

Those that benefited the most from the increase in loans to corporate borrowers were wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, real estate, utilities and financial services, the BSP added.

Aided by the increase in bank loans, the central bank said the economy's overall liquidity grew 7.2 percent in end-February to P6.51 trillion from P6.21 trillion in the

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
April 13, 2012
42.660

STOCK MARKET
April 13, 2012
50.52

Stocks continue to rebound

THE LOCAL stock market rallied sharply yesterday as investor sentiment remained buoyant despite a weaker-than-anticipated first-quarter economic growth in China.

Taking cue from a strong performance in Wall Street overnight, the main share Philippine Stock Exchange index added 50.52 points or 1 percent to close at 5,097.38.

The index ended in positive territory for the second consecutive session as the market started to shake off a long London holiday hangover. This allowed the index to gain 58.38 points or 1.12 percent this week.

Value turnover for the day amounted to P5.7 billion. Buying was more selective than broad-based, however, as there were only 76 advancers against 83 decliners while 41 stocks were unchanged.

The market was supported by the holding firm, property and mining/oil counters whose sectoral indices rose 1.7 percent, 1.38 percent and 1.1 percent, respectively.

An outperformer among index stocks was JG Summit, whose share price surged another 7.2 percent to P33.30. This was after its SM Asia-Pacific-initiated coverage on JGS with a "buy" recommendation and a 12-month target price of P43. Food unit URC (Universal Robina), rising 2.84 percent.

Other index gainers were AGI, Metrobank, SMIC, AC, Megaworld, MI, DMCI and BDO. Investors also bought shares of Rlrac, Megaworld, Security Bank and Puregold.

A failed rocket launch by North Korea and the stronger-than-expected Philippine ar-

ABS-CBN net profit down 24% to ₱2.4B in 2011

Recovery seen in 4th quarter due to 2013 polls

By Paolo G. Montecillo

HOSTS of audiences gone, ABS-CBN Corp. fell nearly a quarter in 2011, in line with an industry-wide drop in earnings due to massive spending cuts by big advertisers and the absence of political campaign placements.

A rare time gain from the sale of a stake in Sky Cable Corp., coupled with the company's uneven ad-related revenue stream, helped save ABS-CBN from a more significant decline. The outlook for 2012, however, remains uncertain as officials said the first three months of the year have been unseasonably erratic.

"In January, ad amounts were down by double digits. By February, we were seeing signs of recovery but last March, we had an all-time high for that month," ABS-CBN chief financial officer Rob Tuddao told reporters yesterday. "We hope we can sustain the momentum for the rest of the year."

Tuddao said the company might benefit from the usual kickstart of the mid-term campaign season by the fourth quarter of this year, "but it won't be that much."

For 2011, ABS-CBN's net profit fell to ₱2.43 billion, down 24 percent from ₱3 billion during the 2010 election year.

The cause of the company-guaranteed consolidated revenues of ₱28.2 billion from advertising and consumer sales, a 13 percent decline compared to 2010. Stripped of the windfall from the sale of its cable and subscription assets in 2010, the company's consolidated revenues for 2011 declined 4 percent year-on-year.

ABS-CBN's advertising revenues reached ₱17.6 billion, a decline of 19 percent from a year ago. Minus the revenues from political advocacy and advertisements in 2010, advertising revenues declined 6 percent year-on-year. "This decrease is attributable to a slowdown in advertising spending by corporations," the company said.

Advertising budgets of multinationals operating in the country were cut due to economic troubles in their home markets.

Total operating and other expenses dropped ₱1.1 billion or 5 percent year-on-year to ₱22.1 billion. "This was partly a result of lower cost of sales and services, and general and administrative expenses as the company continued its effort to manage and control expenses," the company said.

The decline in both expense accounts partly offset the increase in total production costs due to the company's drive to produce quality and innovative programs, ABS-CBN said.

Ayala unit to sell more shares

By Doris C. Dumlao

AYALA LED electronics manufacturing firm Integrated Microelectronics Inc. plans to sell shares either through a private placement or an initial public offering this year to comply with the 10-investor minimum public float required by the Philippine Stock Exchange.

IMI, which listed on the PSE by way of introduction or without an IPO in January 2010, has a 9.7-percent public ownership. The PSE requires companies, which had previously listed by way of introduction, to conduct an IPO afterwards. The local bourse also requires all companies to maintain a public float of at least 10 percent to remain listed.

"We're currently very close [in the negotiations] so we're looking at different options on how to achieve that. We're also looking at market timing. We have the option of [doing a] private placement or IPO depending on market circumstances," IMI chief financial officer Jerome Tan said during the company's annual stockholders' meeting yesterday.

In a briefing after the stockholders' meeting, Tan said that based on the company's discussion with the PSE, it was more important for IMI to meet the minimum 10-percent public float. "We're not sure if we want to do a full IPO," Tan said.

Although the overall local stock market is on a bull run, the global economic slowdown is a big concern for the electronics industry.

Overall, IMI is "cautiously optimistic" for the coming fiscal. This year, the CFO said IMI should do slightly better profits compared to last year. "Our former growth will be driven by our broader geographic presence, expanded track record capabilities and renewed focus on high-value, innovative product and manufacturing solutions," the IMI chief said.

In July last year, IMI completed the acquisition of HPQ subsidiaries in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Mexico. The company now has 17 manufacturing sites in seven countries around the world with an average utilization rate of 60-65 percent.

"The variety of locations leads us a diversity in markets and opportunities and to invest in programs to accommodate the growth in wider client base. This will help ensure greater stability for IMI, as cultivating a broader, healthier mix of clients to remain to preserve the company from the effects of market downturns," Tan said.

"We anticipate to profit from increasing automotive electronic content through the development of driver-assistance systems, safety-related control devices, electronic-steering modules and ignition modules," he said.

IMI is also looking to provide advance power packaging, power modules and next-generation wireless for hybrid and electric vehicles.

"With the emergence of new applications of electronics for the industrial and medical fields, IMI will benefit from ventures with high-technology makers of semiconductors, smart sensors, drivers or cutting-edge sensors and medical camera pills," Tan said.

In support of the world's transition to a less carbon society, Tan said IMI would continue to engage in the development and manufacture of photovoltaic (PV) modules. "IMI is working toward more sustainable solar markets in the future such as concentrated photovoltaics (CPV), a type of solar technology that uses mirrors or lenses and tracking systems to focus a large area of sunlight into a small beam," he said.

Through Sti Technologies Inc., IMI is also involved in the development of LED pavement that will replace the incandescent bulb and driver dozen cents.

IMI has a market capitalization of about ₱7 billion at the local stock market.

Double-digit bank lending growth

Turn to page B2

same period last year. Liquidity is measured by M3, a broad measure of money that includes currencies in circulation, bank deposits and some highly liquid assets.

In 2011, growth in credit from universal and commercial banks rose 19 percent. Bharatiny officials said the healthy pace of lending growth last year helped boost domestic consumption and investments, which countered the adverse effects of external experts on the economy.

BSP chief said bank lending was expected to post yet another double-digit increase this year and that would help the economy accelerate. They said export revenues were likely to be better this year than last year's and a sustained growth in bank lending would help the economy grow at a faster rate.

Last year, the economy expanded by 3.7 percent, a sharp decline from 7.6 percent in 2010. The government has set a target of a faster economic growth rate of between 5 and 6 percent for 2012.

BSP chief said there was room for banks to extend more loans even as credit growth was already robust last year. According to BSP estimates, total outstanding loans from banks and other financial institutions in the country stood at a little more than 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The ratio to GDP ratio is small as the ratios in some neighboring countries are at least twice as much.

Stocks continue to rebound

Turn to page B2

port earnings in February also added to the positive sentiment in the market, some analysts said.

Investors were emboldened by a second day of big gains in Wall Street as the Dow Jones Industrial index surged 101.09 points or 0.81 percent overnight. The Dow Jones Futures indicator, however, was down about 40 points after it was reported that China had grown at its slowest pace in nearly three years in the first quarter. China reported a gross domestic product growth of 8.1 percent year-on-year for the first quarter, a pace which was slower than the market consensus. Boris C. Dumlao

Caption: Taking time for a group photo are (from left) Rodolfo Salalima, SEC Deputy Director for Markets and Securities Regulation Department; Vicente Graciano P. Paet, SEC Commissioner; Fe Barin, SEC Chairperson; Atty. Justino F. Castelo, SEC Commissioner; Ephyro Amir B. Luz, SEC Commissioner; Atty. Ma. Belinda A. Canda, SEC Commissioner; and Atty. Ranulfo M. Madrid, SEC Commissioner.

need a job?

Under new management, PAL opens new int'l route

By Paolo G. Montecillo

FLAG carrier Philippine Airlines (PAL) has launched its first direct international flight from Kalibo—gateway to tourist hotspot Boracay Island—to capitalize on the higher demand seen this summer.

Starting on April 27, PAL said it would start twice a week flights between Kalibo, Aklan and Hong Kong. Flights are scheduled every Tuesday and Friday.

The new flights are aimed at "further boosting tourism demand for Boracay," said PAL, which is now controlled by San Miguel Corp.

The carrier said it would utilize its 160-seater Airbus A320, which can accommodate 12 passengers in business class and 144 people in Economy.

"Special introductory fare for round trip, economy tickets is being offered at 1,250 Hong Kong dollars (P7,425)," PAL said. Of all local airlines, PAL offers Business class and full service on all its narrow-bodied fleet of 34 A320 jets.

The carrier will be the third local airline to offer international flights out of Kalibo, next to Zest Airways and Cebu Pacific.

PAL reopens to sale delivery of six new planes this year, four of which are Airbus A320 jets, to add to the company's fleet. The two others would be long-haul Boeing 777-300 aircraft. With the new jets, the company said it would resume new flights in a bid to regain its lost dominance in the air travel sector.

SMC recently acquired a crucial minority stake in PAL for P500 million following negotiations with the group of Lucio Tan.

SMC president and chief operating officer Ramon S. Ang said the conglomerate could invest as much as $1 billion for the acquisition of more planes to add to PAL's fleet.

PANA
TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

PANA Sends Team to Cannes Lions 2012, Johnson & Johnson Aces 3rd Brand Camp

What a way to spend the weekend before Holy Week: no consecutive all-night and total absence of family responsibilities from the Philippine Association of National Advertisers when PANA Brand Camp for three days of brainstorming to search for the next young superstars that will make their 3rd year of operation PANA member companies.

Seventy-plus other teams, Ogilvy, Saatchi, Carlitos, Isla, and Justina, Bates 'Sin, Sandoro at Johnson & Johnson was represented by Ms. Jean Chan, Publicis and Team Brand 21. The boys and represent the country in the Cannes Lions International Festival (IC) celebrity in Nice.

Andrea Santos, Mercado and Susana Mata Dona Susana, a la Nestle Pinto, shared second, Mitch Pena Montenegro and Francis Jose Ong Chua of Coca-Cola Export Corporation (Pinto).

Tiger Tribunal, Leonard Filipino entertainer, music artist and Composer, presented the background for this year's PANA Brand Camp challenge, dressed in electric presidents of the NAIA Organizational ng Philippine Airlines (PAL). "The airport was already full of passengers, lots of activities, noise, all in one place, style, language and form of expression made by Filipinos anywhere in the world."

Following Tiger's presentation, Carmen's sons notes, the teams are given overnight to prepare a creative that had to be submitted by 8:30am on judgment day. Teams are allotted only 5 minutes to present the creative and ideas shared.

The very young Philippine Airlines team of Jeremy—a play to promote OPM to Filipinos who are now exposed to Lady Gaga, Katy Perry and the Cranberries.

Bates 'Sin and Sandoro at Team Johnson & Johnson sometimes challenge. "The competitive nature of PANA camps because 60% of songs in the weekly top radio charts are OPM. The real contrast is illegal music downloads. That's what's killing the music industry," Jeremy said.

Working on an insight that Filipino love their mobile phones, and they love karaoke, Team Johnson & Johnson proposed a Mobile karaoke videoke interactive, innovative package that can make everyone a singer. Jeremy said that the entire OPM are seamlessly compatible with video and camera lyrics. The team identified the practical Filipino market to be the young professionals and students.

There were too many layers on the value proposition. Wednesday found the creatives in trying to understand the problem, and tried to focus and understand what was at the heart of the matter.

"After struggling with one of ideas, we mapped out targeting, a certain consumer segment, and always going back to the basics of the brief. OPM just really existed in personal memories. When we came to the realization that it's more than it. It was just a matter of tapping the consumer behavior," Bro added.

In 2010, the Carmel Lions opened the Young Marketers Group (YMG) with Ms. Jean Chan, director of Sales, Philippine Global Companies, official Philippine representative to the Cannes Lions, approached PANA to find a representation. "Tony presented to us Ms. Jean, MD Nestle/CVP Ex Marketing, and Corporate Affairs, Cristina Pena Montenegro. Tonio express her role as president on their first year.

Designed as a boot camp for marketing executives, PANA Brand Camp has been extensive training in development and fiction, and performance marketing in critical preparation for the international experience Asia.

Yehlo Brand Camp teaches that you can move away from the templates. This is where we are encouraged to think outside the box, and start your journey to be forever thought-leaders," Tonio says (Text: pmanbuletin.ph/tbc).

Chief Customer Experience and Chief Creative Officer of BDO Unibank, Maria Mercedes Tuason, Chief Strategy Director and Managing Partner of Dittlo Santiago Mangubat Pons, Retail Power Chief Creation Officer at Leo Burnett Manila, Inc. and Chief Executive Officer and Creative Director of Mudpie Inc. and other first PANA Brand Camp.

This year, Tay Ben Diego of Nielsen A.C. gave a talk on the importance of gaining insights, while Gino Bonifacio of Mc-Cann Philippines Philippines shared some Worst Starts of emphasis Strategic Planning, Leo Burnett and Arc Worldwide Manila's Dan Tolosa presented case studies on the Best Digital Implementations, and Paolo Molina also from Saatchi & S gave a session on Storytelling.

As PANA Brand Camp VP (1,2) Bridges for Design Founder & Chairman Brandon Bond Pinto; Chief Creative Officer, Leo Burnett Manila, Jeanne Sarmiento and Rodrigo Santos' Team Johnson & Johnson, Brand Manager Jean Philippine & Chief Creative Officer, BBDO Guerrero, Mabini Mangubat Association Creative Director & Managing Partner CBMA Santiago Mangubat Pons

Presenting J. Pinheiro (middle ribbed) announces that the Kapa solution for video OPM. Team Johnson & Johnson Justina Cisneros and Rodrigo Santos present their winning brief to PANA Richard Kong.

Moody's reduces PLDT rating, aligns it with sovereign grade

FIRST number Moody's Investor Service has cut the peso-trade score for Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) by a notch in a move to more closely align the company's credit with the country's own sovereign debt rating.

But the ratings agency said the downgrade did not mean PLDT's financial strength had weakened, despite posting four-year profits and an accelerated spending program, Moody's said PLDT's continued inclusion ranged in the country's lucrative telco sector.

At Stock, PLDT's rating remains at investment grade and is two notches above the Philippines' Ba2 status. The company also remains the country's love saved corporation.

"PLDT's credit quality remains well laid, based despite a sizeable recent acquisition and an accelerated capex program," Moody's said. "We continue to take [on] as usual PLDT's strong fundamental credit quality, evidenced by an manageable leverage and excellent liquidity."

However, Moody's said that since the company's overseas operations—mainly driven by domestic operations—early the contributions of international sales being almost negligible—PLDT's fate was still tied with that of the domestic economy. Paolo G. Montecillo

2 firms sell off chunks of CHI shares

By Doris C. Bumbac

GLOBAL asset management group Aberdeen has returned its stake in property developer Cebu Holdings Inc., selling about 599,0.75 million worth of shares in March, just as the company's shares were on the rise.

In a regulatory filing, Singapore-based Aberdeen Asset Management Asia Ltd. said it had sold 31.3 million indirect shares in CHI at the time it purchase at prices ranging between P6 to P6.8 a share. The buyer of the shares was not disclosed.

Here with the sale, Aberdeen is still left with an 11.6-percent interest in CHI, equivalent to about 222.84 million shares.

Based on Friday's closing price of P6.96 a share, CHI had a market capitalization of about P1.34 billion.

Another foreign investor in CHI, First Metro Investment Corp., also sold some shares in March. Based on a regulatory filing, FMIC said it bought and sold shares during the month.

FMIC was a net seller of 1.69 million shares at a price range of P5.9 and P7.42 per share. It is left with about 11.52 percent or 221.2 million shares in CHI.

CHI, which is 27-percent owned by Ayala Land Inc., is engaged in real estate development in Cebu.

THE KARITON REVOLUTION GOES TO SM

Cambodia have always been on the forefront of change and transformation. During the revolutionary period Dynamic Duo: Aga-pogito played an instrumental role in the fight for Philippine Independence proclaiming the country's freedom at the balcony of his home in Kawit.

In 2008, Efren Penaflorida, of the Dynamic Teen Company from Cavite City, grew our country much pride when he was named CNN Hero of the Year for starting the movement change for children's education through his kariton.

Boys Efren and the Dynamic Teen Company recently made history again by launching a Kariton Revolution, using this iconic symbol as a touchstone for change in his hometown. Different barangays and pilot communities around Cavite City joined in the Kariton Makeover, while children were encouraged to express their creativity through Poetry Writing and Poster Making Contests.

The Dynamic Teen Company's Kariton Revolution also found its way to the mall, with a launching at SM City Bacoor, and stops at SM City Sta. Mesa and SM City Rosario. The event began with a parade of kariton. Kariton fits bet by Cavite City Mayor Olivarez Barzaga and SK Chairman Dean Kuzma, Kariton fits on Kariton Clinic pushed by Kaz Xelsz, founder of DTC's Caring Children and the SM Kariton featuring a replica of the Agoncillo Store with officials from SM's Cavite Malls. The mall crowd cheered as CNN Hero Efren Penaflorida emerged with his Kariton Kasmun.

2009 CNN Hero of the Year Efren Peñaflorida and Cavite City Mayor Olivarez Barzaga led the ribbon cutting ceremony during the Kariton Revolution Exhibit Launch at SM Bacoor. With him are (left to right) Joseph Formoselo, assistant mall manager at SM Bacoor; Councilor Dominic Olivarez; Councilor Ricardo De Castro; Atty. Efren Penaflorida, Vice President for Marketing; and Rona Monalayao, mentor of Dynamic Teen Company.

The event also featured performances by Ke Yesha Robin de Castro as well as exhibits of the winning works in the the Poster Making Contest. Mar Rivie Basilog, winner of the Poetry Writing Contest, recited his winning piece. Said na sa Kariton Pa, lahuwan.

Batista, Industry Mayor Recies, Bacoor Councilor Reinz de Castro, Dynamic Teen Company Mentor Efren Manalaysay, and SM Foundation of Barangay 58 in Cavite City joined Efren in making a stand for the Tay to the surrendered board - kalikasan, kalusugan, kaligtasan, kalusugan, kalikasan, kapayapaan, and kanyungan. SM officials led by Vice President of Marketing Millie Dizon as well as SM Supermalls Assistant Mall Managers Joseph Formoselo, Cristina Batallo, and PJ Ramos of Bacoor, Dasmarinas, and Molino, respectively, welcomed them.

The Kariton Revolution exhibit carried icons of the many exciting community events of the SM Supermalls.

Kenneth Montenegro, 1st place winner representing Bernary division of Tagaytay Puggalan an art revolution - as on the spot poster making contest.

Ke Jean Dale Sofia Balbuena, 2nd place winner for elementary division of the Tagaytay Puggalan.

Sangguniang Kabataan members of Barangay 58, Cavite City, receive their commemorative tee shirts as the pledge wall.

Cavite City Mayor Strimo Barzaga with Sangguniang Kabataan Chairman Dean Jason Ivanhoe Kuzma.

INQUIRER
Official Festival Representative

IMF needs less money, says Lagarde

WASHINGTON—A stronger firewall is needed to protect the world economy from Europe's debt crisis, but the International Monetary Fund may not need so much money as it thought just a few months ago, the head of the global lending said on Thursday. Speaking before meetings of finance chiefs in Washington on April 20-21, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde said a deal among countries on giving more money to the fund would likely take time, signaling no agreement may not be sealed next week.

However, the mid-economic cool-humored chief IMF had identified just three months ago had receded and the global lender's funding needs were now smaller.

In January the IMF estimated it would need an additional $600 billion to head off risks from Europe's debt crisis. It now says $400 billion for members to erect an adequate safeguard against the risks posed by the eurozone's crisis.

Both advanced and emerging economies, including Japan and Canada, have said they want Europe to do more to help itself before they offer fresh resources to help.

Lagarde said she was not concerned about building up IMF resources for the euro-zone bailout countries, given the region has that could have follow.

"A stronger global firewall will help complete the 'circle of protection' for every country," she said at the Brookings Institution. "The IMF can help, but to be as effective as possible we need to increase our resources." The meetings of the IMF's 187 member countries next week will be dominated by discussions on new IMF resources, pressing countries Europe's crisis could weaken as Italy and Spain, and slowing growth in major emerging markets, including China. Reuters

Asia stock markets rise as North Korea rocket fails

SEOUL/HONG KONG—Asian shares dragged off China's slowing growth Friday, rallying after US markets rose and North Korea's rocket launch failed.

South Korea's Kospi jumped 0.9 percent to 2,000.81, rebounding from losses earlier in the week after the Seattle crash. It hasn't ended in bottom Friday where it exploded shortly after takeoff. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 climbed 1.1 percent to 9,925.97. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 1.1 percent to 20,699.09.

Mainland Chinese shares were higher on expectations for further measures to boost the economy. The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index edged up 0.4 percent to 2,388.62. The smaller Shenzhen Composite Index added 0.7 percent to 981.91.

"The GDP data is within market expectations and both policy and the economy are stable. Years in the shadow of slowdown growth is still above the government's target," said Li Junfeng, an analyst at Guotai Jinanzheng, based in Shanghai. The government's second quarter target is 7.5 percent.

Overall, there was a sense of confidence that China is managing to steer the economy into a soft landing with moderate cooling toward a "land landing."

"Chinese policymakers likely are neither to sleep at the wheel nor as panicked by public fear reduction as global investors," said Stephen Green, Standard Chartered Bank's head of research in Shanghai, in a report.

Overnight, US shares bounced back from a three-day slump. The Dow Jones industrial average climbed 1.4 percent to close at 12,990.34, its second biggest gain this year.

Suggestions that the European Central Bank may resume purchases of bonds of financially weak countries to help keep yields low and reduce borrowing costs also helped assuage worries over possible financial risks, said Ayako.

Futures on CAC-40 were 1 percent to close at 3,388, while Germany's DAX moved up the same rate to 6,743. The FTSE index of leading British shares, surged 1.3 percent to 5,758. AP

A LABORER walks on rails of steel wire at a steel market in Shenyang, Liaoning province. China's economy grew at its slowest in nearly three years in the first three months of 2012, with a weaker than expected reading raising investor concerns that a five-quarter long slide has not bottomed and that more policy action would be needed to halt it. AFP

China's growth falls to nearly three-year low

But rebound expected soon

BEIJING—China's economic growth fell to its lowest level in nearly three years in the first quarter but analysts said the economy should rebound in coming months.

Growth in the world's second-biggest economy declined to a still-robust 8.1 percent in the three months ending in March, data showed Friday. That was down from the previous quarter's 8.9 percent and the weakest since the second quarter of 2009.

China's rapid growth has declined steadily since 2010 as a slump in global demand hobbled its exports and Beijing tightened lending and investment curbs to cool overheated economic and inflationary pressures.

An uncontrolled slump could have global repercussions, hurting demand for oil, industrial components and consumer goods in a time when US and European growth is sluggish.

It also might fuel political tensions in China as the ruling Communist Party prepares for a sensitive, once-a-decade handover of power to younger leaders.

"The quarter's growth was pretty weak," said BMI Global Insight analyst Xiaohong Ben. "Nothing from next quarter's growth should surprise."

The World Bank and private sector analysts expect China to achieve a "soft landing," that is growth rebounding later this year. But some worry growth might fall too abruptly, raising the risk of job losses.

Last year's unexpectedly sharp plunge in demand for Chinese goods in the US and European economic woes prompted communist leaders to reverse course and ease credit with cut bank lending to help struggling manufacturers.

"The 'soft landing' seems to be very likely," said Francis Cheung, senior strategist for Credit Agricole CIB in Hong Kong.

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund expect 8.2 percent growth for China this year, before 2013's expansion hits 10.4 percent expansion but in denial of the low-single-digit recession for the United States, Japan and Europe.

Other data showed Chinese factory activity, retail sales and exports weakening over the course of the first quarter, though still weaker than last year.

Industrial production rose 12.1 percent over a year earlier in March, up 0.3 percentage points from the January-February period. Retail sales rose 15.1 percent, also up 0.5 percentage points from the period two months. Export growth was 8.9 percent, up 0.1 points to 8.9 percent, though that was well below China's double-digit rates in recent years.

"China's economy is stabilizing," said Zheng Luqiao, a spokesperson for the National Bureau of Statistics, at a news conference.

Data released Thursday showed bank lending in March soared to just over 1 trillion yuan ($159 billion), well above analysts' forecasts.

On Thursday the World Bank slashed its growth forecast for China this year from 8.4 percent but said it expects the economy to avoid an abrupt slowdown.

"The near-term challenge now is to maintaining this 'soft landing' that we are under way," the bank's lead China economist Asli Demirguc-Kunt reported. AP

MASSIVE JOB CUTS

Sony shares tumble as revival plan disappoints

TOKYO—Shares of Sony Corp fell as much as 5 percent on a two-month low on Friday as new CEO Kazuo Hirai's road map to revive the iconic consumer electronics maker failed to impress investors who were looking for a more aggressive strategy.

Sony is struggling to recover from four years of losses and regain the innovative flair of its 1980s glory, having fallen behind overseas by today's gadget heroes Apple and Samsung Electronics.

The company this week forecast a record net loss of $20 billion yen ($8.4 billion) for the just-ended fiscal year and, here, Hirai's strategy under the weight of a TV business that has not made a profit in eight years. Plans, less drastic were needed, to lift to improve

Republic of the Philippines

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 240
Series 2012

SUBJECT : Rules and Regulations in the Implementation of Fisheries Observer Program in the High Seas

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a party to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean and by Republic Act No. 8550 as amended by RA 10654, otherwise known as the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998;

WHEREAS, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), mandated to promote international cooperation to ensure conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks;

WHEREAS, on December 2007 the WCPFC has adopted Conservation and Management Measure 2007-01 that provides for the establishment and Management of Regional Observer Program in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO);

WHEREAS, on December 2009 the WCPFC has adopted Conservation and Management Measure 2009-01that provides for the establishment and Management of Regional Observer Program in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO);

WHEREAS, the Philippines as a Party to the Convention and to other Tuna RFMOs must ensure full compliance thereto for the conservation of conservation and management measures;

Pursuant to the provisions of Fisheries Observers in the conservation and management of Marine Fish and Aquatic Resources of the Philippines and in the High Seas and consistent to the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 and other relevant laws, rules and regulations, the following rules and regulations governing the implementation of the Philippine Fisheries Observer Program (PFOP) is hereby promulgated for the following areas and regulations:

Section 1. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Order, the following terms, words and phrases as used herein shall mean and shall be construed as follows:

1. BFAR – Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR);
2. Boarding – Boarding of the Fishing Vessel by the Observer;
3. Commission – Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean;
4. Convention Area – The Western and Central Pacific Ocean;
5. Commercial WCPFC – The Regional Observer Program (ROP) which was established under WCPFC CMM 2007-01;
6. Fishing Vessel – Any vessel, boat, ship or other watercraft equipped for use for taking of fish and aquatic resources, including motherships, transshipment vessels, refrigerated transport vessels and fish processing vessels, auxiliary vessels supporting fishing vessels, except vessels used solely for carrying passengers;
7. High Seas – The sea beyond;
8. Observer – Any person duly authorized by the Philippine Government to be deployed in the Philippine Fishing Vessel and/or Vessel of other Flag State pursuant to the WCPFC Convention and Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) adopted thereunder;
9. Observer Report – The report to be submitted by the Observer to the Philippine Government and to the Flag State of the Fishing Vessel on board which the Observer was deployed;
10. Observer Trip – The trip of the Observer on board the Fishing Vessel;
11. Port – Any port, roadstead, inlet, river, estuary, dock, or any other facility located in the Philippines and other Flag State where Fishing Vessels are normally received to enable landing, transshipment, processing, refitting and/or resupplying;
12. Transshipment – The unloading of all or any of the fish on board a fishing vessel to another fishing vessel either at sea or in port;
13. WCPFC – Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission;
14. WPFC – Western Pacific Fisheries Commission;
15. IATTC – Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission;
16. IOTC – Indian Ocean Tuna Commission;
17. ICCAT – International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas;
18. IPP – International Port of Refuge;
19. IUU – Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated;
20. Longline – a fishing technique that consists of using lines, called this main line, with many baited hooks attached to it. This can be deployed from a fishing vessel and can be left to drift or set;
21. PFOP – Philippine Fisheries Observer Program;
22. PNOROP – Philippine Regional Observer Program Operational Office;
23. Purse Seiner – a classification of fishing gear which consists of a series of panels of netting of various depths, lengths and mesh sizes or mesh numbers joined together to form a wall. Purse seine nets are pulled around fish by two vessels and then the bottom of the net is pursed by means of a line that runs through rings attached to the bottom of the net. The net is then hauled aboard by winches on the vessel;
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240. IUU – Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated;
241. Longline – a fishing technique that consists of using lines, called this main line, with many baited hooks attached to it. This can be deployed from a fishing vessel and can be left to drift or set;
242. PFOP – Philippine Fisheries Observer Program;
243. PNOROP – Philippine Regional Observer Program Operational Office;
244. Purse Seiner – a classification of fishing gear which consists of a series of panels of netting of various depths, lengths and mesh sizes or mesh numbers joined together to form a wall. Purse seine nets are pulled around fish by two vessels and then the bottom of the net is pursed by means of a line that runs through rings attached to the bottom of the net. The net is then hauled aboard by winches on the vessel;
245. Regional Observer – Any person duly authorized by the Philippine Government to be deployed in the Philippine Fishing Vessel and/or Vessel of other Flag State pursuant to the WCPFC Convention and Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) adopted thereunder;
246. Regional Observer Program – The Regional Observer Program established by the Commission and implemented by members, cooperating non-members and participating territories (MCPTs) in accordance with the provisions of CMM 2007-01 and any successor CMM;
247. Regional Observer Report – The report to be submitted by the Regional Observer to the Philippine Government and to the Flag State of the Fishing Vessel on board which the Regional Observer was deployed;
248. Regional Observer Trip – The trip of the Regional Observer on board the Fishing Vessel;
249. Transshipment – The unloading of all or any of the fish on board a fishing vessel to another fishing vessel either at sea or in port;
250. Vessel – Any boat, ship or other watercraft equipped for use for taking of fish and aquatic resources, including motherships, transshipment vessels, refrigerated transport vessels and fish processing vessels, auxiliary vessels supporting fishing vessels, except vessels used solely for carrying passengers;
251. WCPFC – Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission;
252. WPFC – Western Pacific Fisheries Commission;
253. IATTC – Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission;
254. IOTC – Indian Ocean Tuna Commission;
255. ICCAT – International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas;
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310. PFOP – Philippine Fisheries Observer Program;
311. PNOROP – Philippine Regional Observ

Republic of the Philippines
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Department of Finance

INVITATION TO BID

Supply, Delivery, Installation, Configuration, Testing and Commissioning of an Automated Storage System with a Usable Capacity of Twenty (20) Terabytes

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) through the General Appropriations Act (GAA), intends to apply the sum of Fourteen Million Nine Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 14,900,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) alongside current SEC-GOP funds in payment for the Supply, Delivery, Installation, Configuration and Testing of an Automated Storage System with a Usable Capacity of Twenty (20) Terabytes. The contract duration is Thirty (30) calendar days, from receipt of Notice of the ABC and not automatically implementing the bids opening.

SEC now invites bids for the Supply of Services for the above-mentioned project. Bidders should have completed, within Three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly in Section II. Instruction to Bidders.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 as amended by Presidential Decree No. 1789.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the SEC Secretariat, and inspect the Bidding Documents at the Secretariat Division, 4th Floor, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, starting April 16, 2012 upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Ten Thousand Pesos (Php 10,000.00).

SEC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on April 20, 2012, 10:00 A.M. at the Training Room, 4th Floor, SEC Building, EDSA Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, which must be open only to all interested bidders who have purchased the Bidding Documents.

Bids must be delivered to the General Services Division, 4th Floor, SEC Building on or before May 4, 2012 on 10:00AM. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause no. 19.

Bids opening shall be held on May 4, 2012 at 10:00 A.M. at the Training Room, 4th Floor, SEC Building, EDSA Greenhills, Mandaluyong City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives. Late bids shall not be accepted.

The SEC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further details, you may contact the BAC Secretariat at tel. no. 8442-2100 loc. 5000/5001.

(Sgd.) **BENEDICT S.C. CATALAN**
Chairman, BAC

(TR) Apr. 14, 2012

PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE
Daet, Camarines Norte
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Camarines Norte, through its Bids and Awards Committee, hereby invites contractors registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and its respective and appropriate Classification and Category:

P.C.A.B. License No.	0019414 (Under 'B')
Name of Project	Infrastructure and Rehabilitation for the Agricultural Support Services Project (ASSP) - ASSP Bulk Grain Dryer (Batch 2)
Location	Purok Dos, Barangay Dos, Basud, Camarines Norte
Classification	Construction/Civil Engineering
Source of Fund	National Funds
Approved Budget for the Contract	₱ 10,000,000.00
Contract Duration	180 days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License, applicable to the contract cost, contractor's current contract cost in excess of at least two (2) times ABC, and have no derogatory records with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) as non-delinquent taxpayers. Prior to the Bidding Date, the bidding is open to the Contractors duly registered in Bids. The bidder will conduct post qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 as amended by Presidential Decree No. 1789.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat, and inspect the Bidding Documents at the Provincial Government Compound, 4th Floor, BAC Building, Bonifacio Street, Daet, Camarines Norte starting April 16, 2012 upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Ten Thousand Pesos (Php 10,000.00).

BAC Activities	Date	Time
Advertisement/ Posting of IAEB	April 16 to April 18, 2012	
Pre-qualification of PCAB Licensed Contracting Agencies for Bidding	April 16 to April 18, 2012	9:00 a.m. Provincial Government Compound, Daet, Camarines Norte
Issuance of Bidding Documents	April 16 to April 18, 2012	9:00 a.m. Provincial Government Compound, Daet, Camarines Norte
Pre-bid Conference	April 18, 2012	2:00 p.m. Provincial Government Compound, Daet, Camarines Norte
Receipt and Opening of Bids	April 20, 2012	2:00 p.m. Provincial Government Compound, Daet, Camarines Norte

The BAC will reserve to prospective bidders Security of Eligible Requirements of the BAC Secretariat Office, Daet, Camarines Norte. Eligibility documents consists of a notice of award and a valid and current Mayor's Permit. Bidders must submit their bids through the BAC Secretariat on the date and time mentioned above. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause 19.2 and 19.3 of the Bidding Documents.

The BAC will open the bids in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address and date specified above. Late bids shall not be accepted.

The Provincial Government of Camarines Norte reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award or prior to the issuance of the Notice to Proceed, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further information, please refer to the BAC Secretariat at telephone no. 054-440-0045 local 109.

(Sgd.) **ANTHONY ANDERSON G. PANGANIBAN**
Provincial Administrator
Chairman, BAC Secretariat

(TR) Apr. 14, 2012

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Isabela
MUNICIPALITY OF SAN MARIANO

INVITATION TO BID FOR

Concreting of Roads at Barangays: San Pedro, Bitalag and Dangcalan West Road Section, San Mariano, Isabela

(Date: April 13, 2012)
Invitation No. 2012-04

1. The Municipal Government of San Mariano, Isabela through the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) intends to apply the sum of Seven Million Five Hundred Eighty Thousand Pesos only (₱7,580,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payment under the Concreting of Roads at Barangays: San Pedro, Bitalag and Dangcalan West Road. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening.
2. The Municipal Government of San Mariano, Isabela now invites bids for the Concreting of Roads at Brgys: San Pedro, Bitalag and Dangcalan West Road Section, San Mariano, Isabela.
3. Completion of the Works is three hundred sixty (360) calendar days. Bidders should have completed, within the period from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly in Section II. Instruction to Bidders.
4. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act". Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/ sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty (60) percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines.
5. Interested bidders may obtain further information from Bids' Secretariat, address at the Mayor 2nd Floor, Municipal Hall Building, San Mariano, Isabela ("Telefax Number" 078-664-8045) and accept the Bidding Documents starting **April 13, 2012** during office hours.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of **Fifteen Thousand Five Hundred Pesos only (₱15,500.00)**. The Bidding Documents may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the Procuring Entity, provided that Bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.
7. The Municipal Government of San Mariano, Isabela will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on **April 20, 2012, 10:00 AM** at DPWA of the Mayor, 2nd Floor, Municipal Hall Building, San Mariano, Isabela which shall be open to prospective bidders who have purchased the Bidding Documents.
8. Bids must be delivered on or before **04:00 P.M. May 4, 2012** at the Municipal Mayor's Office, 2nd Floor, Municipal Hall Building, San Mariano, Isabela. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause 19. Late bids shall not be accepted.
9. Bid opening will be on **May 4, 2012** at 10:00 AM at DPWA of the Mayor, 2nd Floor, Municipal Hall, San Mariano, Isabela. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
10. The Municipal Government of San Mariano, Isabela reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the Bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **ENGR. LORENZO C. SORIANO, JR.**
Municipal Engineer/ BAC Chairperson

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
DR. JOSE FABIOS LA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Lam-ingan St., Sta. Cruz, Manila

INVITATION TO BID

The Dr. Jose Fabios Memorial Hospital invites bids for the Intermittent Indirect supplies to inform the supply and delivery of:

ABC
FOODSTUFFS SUPPLIES P 4,100,000.00

Bid documents may be acquired at the BAC Secretariat, Administrative Office upon payment of non-refundable fee at the Cashier's Office. For inquiries, please contact Secretariat Telephone (+63-2) 743 xxx, 110.

Schedule of Activities

Pre-bid Conference	April 20, 2012, 10:00 a.m.	Venue: 2nd Floor Training Room
Bid Opening	May 4, 2012, 2:00 p.m.	2nd Floor Training Room

All submissions relative to eligibility, bid security, performance security, post-qualification, opening of bids, evaluation, post-qualification and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions under R.A 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any technicality, to award the contract to the bidder who in the committee's determination will best serve the government.

The BAC/HPDC assumes no obligation to communicate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred during the preparation and presentation of bids nor does it guarantee award to any bidder.

BONA M. CUEVAS
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(TR) Apr. 14, 2012

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Center for Health Development and Communications
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY
Regional Office 8
2/F Room 206 Bldg. Bonifacio St. Brgy. 88 Abucay, Tacloban City, Philippines
Contact No. (053) 321-2065
Telefax No. (053) 321-2065
Website: www.marina.gov.ph
E-mail Address: marina8@yahoo.com

NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is to be published to the General Circulation of Leyte, Samar, Biliran, Southern Leyte and Eastern Leyte Provinces, Region VIII, Philippines, on the 2nd week of April 2012 and 3rd week of April 2012 for the purpose of the hearing to be held on the 4th week of April 2012.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has filed with the Maritime Industry Authority Regional Office No. VIII, Tacloban City, Philippines, on the 2nd day of April 2012 a petition for the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) to operate a Motorized Bangka for the transportation of passengers and cargoes from Tacloban City to Basey, Samar and vice versa.

The petitioner prays that the CPC be issued in favor of the petitioner for the operation of the above-mentioned vessel.

Any person who has an interest in the application may file his/her written opposition thereto with the Maritime Industry Authority Regional Office No. VIII, Tacloban City, Philippines, on or before the date of the hearing.

ATTY. ROMEO M. CAPACIO
Regional Director

(TR) Apr. 14, 2012

NOTICE

Pilot, STEEL BAY SALVAGING SERVICES with address at 270 A. Rodriguez St., Diversy Biliran Municipality City proposed to undertake salvaging on the sunken hull (1,000MT) of abandoned vessel located 200 meters from the shore of Brgy. Agbasa, Salvacion, Dalutayan Municipality and Biliran City of the concerned local government as navigational hazard. The Emergency Permit covering the said salvaging services are on file with the Philippine Coast Guard District Command, Tacloban City.

Any interested parties who have claims on the said vessel/ debris to be salvaged to file their claims and/or objections to the said office of the Philippine Coast Guard in Tacloban City.

(TR) - March 31 & April 14, 2012

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO SUBMIT BID PROPOSAL

WHAT - Public Bidding re: Supply of ISELCO Power Requirements for July 26, 2012 to July 25, 2013
Bids Through e-PHILGEPS

WHEN

Release of Invitation to Bid	April 16 to May 7, 2012
Deadline for Submission of Bid Proposal	May 8, 2012
Pre-Bid Conference	May 8, 9, 2012
Opening of Bids/ Bidding	May 14, 2012
Evaluation of Bids	May 15-25, 2012
Award (subject to successful negotiation & BPC approval)	May 28, 2012

WHERE - Boardroom, ISELCO-1 Main Office Compound, Victoria, Reina Mercedes

For inquiries, you may call the Chairman of the Bids & Awards Committee, Mrs. Lucrecia M. Torres at 09-05-852-4722 or the BAC Secretariat at 078-652-7122.

(Sgd.) **MS. LUCRECIA D. TORRES**
Chairman, BAC

(TR) April 14, 16 & 18, 2012

Now Open to Serve You

Philippine Daily Inquirer opens a new Classified Advertising Branch in Pasig City at No. 11 Freemont Arcade, Shaw Blvd., Pasig City between Pioneer St. & Meralco Ave. near SSS Pasig office.

OBITUARIES

Mario Luis Buenaventura Santaromana, Sr.

"Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light." – Dylan Thomas

Mario joined our Creator on the 9th of April, 2012, 4 days before his 48th birthday.

He will forever be remembered by his wife, Trixie, with whom he lovingly raised 7 children, Mikyl, Louie, Frankie, Sonny, Tony, Nino, and Mark.

Memorial service was held at the Church of St. Agnes Pamplanville, 14th of April at 10:00 a.m. A separate date in the Philippines shall be announced by returning family members.

To those who knew him, Mario was a writer, artist, poet, critic, a man of wit, and most importantly, a brilliant mind with a big heart. To his family, he was a loving husband, devoted father, respectful son, reliable brother, generous kin and kumpare to all.

The Santaromana family would like to wholeheartedly thank everyone for their kind thoughts and prayers.

"I ask the Blessed Mother to kiss you, for you are dear to me. To keep you safe from all harm, dangers, sickness, sins, and temptations. God bless you and your family and put your faith and trust in the Lord."

Atty. Josefa Pantoja Lozano

of Bahayan, Barangay 8, Blue Ridge, Quezon City
27 August 1923 – 26 March 2012

Nancy's final statements with us were made more meaningful, memorable and bearable with the many expressions of sympathy, the comforting words, thoughtful gestures, the memories shared with kindness, and the never-to-be-forgotten help you provided in sharing our moments of sorrow.

Thank you very much for your presence, prayers, thoughts and offerings.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." – 2 Timothy 4:7

Teodulfa "Dolping" A. Sarabia

died on April 08, 2012, at the age of 78.

Her remains lie at 4046 Leon Avenue Interior, Tanalo Subdivision, Bgy Gen. T. De Leon, Valenzuela City.

Interment will be on April 15, 2012, 3:00 p.m. at Holy Cross Memorial Park, San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City.

Inquirer Obituaries

"For I am sure, neither death nor life, nor any angel, nor any demon, nor things present nor things to come, nor any powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." – Romans 8:38-39

"Come and let us return to the Lord; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up."
– Hosea 6:1

BAGUIO CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO BID

The Baguio Central University (BCU), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Construction of Shoulder Retaining Wall, Installation of Steel Railing, Paving, Asphalting, Overlay and Installation of Road Marking/Painting (Materials at 1/F and 12th Floor, Main Library Bldg. for the BCP Senior Rationalization Project per BCP Technical Specifications and Scope of Work)
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	₱ 10,500,000.00
Completion period	One hundred eighty (180) calendar days reckoned from the date stipulated in the Notice to Proceed to be issued by the Project Management and Management Office

Prospective bidders should have undertaken not more than three (3) contracts for similar requirement as certified and completed within the last two (2) years from date of submission and opening of bids with an aggregate amount of not less than 50% of the ABC, one (1) which shall be at least 25% of the ABC. To be properly shortlisted, the bidder must also posses the prescribed set of Operational and Financial Standards as stated in the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

All contractors relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Monday 13 April 2012 (from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 NN and 1:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M. only) Procurement Office Room 212, 2nd Floor, Pax Rizal Building, A. Bonifacio corner P. Guzman St., Baguio, Mobile Number Telephone No. Tel. No. 300-3122 Fax No. 706-7130
2. Joint Site Inspection	Tuesday, 17 April 2012, 10:00 AM BCM/CO conference Room 2nd Floor, Pax Rizal Bldg. BCP Main Campus, Mobile/Mobile
3. Pre-bid Conference	20 April 2012, 9:30 AM BAC/CO conference Room, 2nd Floor, Pax Rizal Bldg. BCP Main Campus, Mobile/Mobile
4. Submission and Opening of Bids	27 April 2012, 2:00 PM BAC/CO conference Room, 2nd Floor, Pax Rizal Bldg., BCP Main Campus, Mobile/Mobile
5. Bid Evaluation	Three (3) days to be in accordance with the prescribed periods indicated in the revised IRR of R.A. No. 9184
6. Post-qualification	
7. Notice of Award	

The ITB and Checklist of Requirements for Bidders may be downloaded from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the BCP Website (www.bcp.edu.ph). The complete set of the Bidding Documents may be purchased by the prospective bidders from the address stated below upon presentation of the PhilGEPS Supplier's Order Form and payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of ₱5,000.00.

Only bidders who have purchased the bidding documents shall be allowed to submit written queries or clarification.

The BAC assumes no responsibility whatsoever as to consequences or indemnity arising from any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BAC reserves the right to exercise opportunity to declare the bidding a failure, not to award the contract, to annul the bidding process and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders. Furthermore, the BAC reserves the right to waive any minor defects or formality and to accept the proposed most advantageous to the agency.

(Sgd.) ENRIQUE C. DOMINGO
Chairman

(PCO - April 14, 2012)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DOLE-NCR Building, 827 Intramuros St.
Manila, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
RUTHEX PHARMACEUTICAL CORP. (RUTHEX Cosmetopedic Formulation Solid Multidrugs Inc)	Mayank Awasthi Rajendra Prakash Indian	Country Manager
COORDINATOR FOR AMERICAN HELIX EXPERIMENTS, INC. (CAHE PHILIPPINES) BAP Grupo Apex Plaza Madrid Ave. cor. Hilya & Kapahan Roads, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Carsten Gregory Klingsporn German	Global Accounting and Administrative Manager
KOREAN TRADING 123 Reactions Ave., Bo Ave., Caloocan City	Yeghiazarian Ivan Korean	Foreign Consultant
BSI GLOBAL SOLUTIONS PHILIPPINES INC 6F Cirugeon, 2301 Chino Roces Ave. Ext. Makati City	Andrew Baldwin British	Business Systems Leader - Operations
DHARMOO CIT TRADING CORP. 809 Citytrend Mega Plaza, #28 Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Ki Dae Chang Korean	General Manager
BOBBY (PHILS.) CORPORATION No. 19 West Service Road, South Superhighway, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Bhagwanpuria Japanese	Consultant
RANSON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 14/F Multinational Tower, #23C Pioneer, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City	Brian Mahoney Israeli	Quality Expert
ABIA SELECT, INC. 6F The Metropolitan Bldg., 1653 Jacobo St. Sabuco, Ortigas, Makati City	Yann Maxence Gaston French	Architect - Civil
CORPORATE FUSION INC. 7/F Wilkinson Bldg., Salcedo cor. Rufino St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Wan Ann Raphael Lim Singaporean	Marketing Manager
SUPPLIER LINKING INC. SLP 1, 5 Cavanaugh Signal Village, Taguig City	Sikander Singh Indian	Purchasing Officer
SIRIC PHILIPPINES, INC. unit 606-608 The Church Square Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Peter Gerald Ward New Zealand	General Transport Operations Manager - Asia Pacific
SUPERSONIC TRADING CORP. #9 Singian St., Remnec Subdivision, Cubao, Quezon City	Gurmeetveer Singh Dhillon Indian	Purchasing Officer
GLOBAL ARBITECH PHILIPPINES INC. 14th Floor, Ayala Life-FGU Center, 6811 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Vijay Kumar Alla Indian	Operations Manager
K-LU MOTORS AND TRADING CORPORATION #24 Road 1 cor. Sumilao St., Bo. Kapitolyo, Pasig City	Hongli Yao Chinese	Technical Advisor
CHAMBERLIN (PHILIPPINES), INC. Unit 508 Center Bldg., Perea St. cor. C. Raymundo Ave., Pasig City	Rishi Kant Sharma s/o Chhotmal Indian	Sales Supervisor
CHAMBERLIN (PHILIPPINES), INC. Unit 508 Center Bldg., Perea St. cor. C. Raymundo Ave., Pasig City	Anita Del Dios Hoe Mirasol Filipino	Sales Supervisor
KING JIH ENTERPRISES CORPORATION #106 ALPHA Bldg., Bonifacio Avenue, Brgy. Kapitolyo, Pasig City	Hung Kuen Leung Sallie Ch'ien Chinese	Technical Administrative Consultant
MEGA ASSURE INC. #17 EC Royal Bldg., Emerald Ave., Pasig City	Jeong Ho Kim (with id 496) Korean	Resident Advisor Consultant
ANTENORA GROUP GLOBAL SERVICES, INC. 12th & 24th Floors, 3 Eastwood Ave., Eastwood City Cyberpark, E. Rodriguez, Jr. Ave., Libis, Quezon City	Sundaramoorthy Subramanian Indian	Project Manager

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
GENERALIT SERVICES (U.K.) GF Sampaguita Bldg., Northgate Cyberzone, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Abhishek Singh Indian	Assistant Vice President - Operations
NEXSOFT WORLD (U.S.) CO., LTD. INC. GF Dominican Hotel, 110 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Sebastian Tabuteau Japanese	Project Supervisor
LOGICA (PHILIPPINES), INC. UP Ore North Square, Northgate Hill, Taguig City	Erik Mathieson Dutch/Belgian Nationality	Service Desk Analyst
LOGICA (PHILIPPINES), INC. UP Ore North Square, Northgate Hill, Taguig City	Michael Christian Hanssen Swedish	Service Desk Analyst
LOGICA (PHILIPPINES), INC. UP Ore North Square, Northgate Hill, Taguig City	Magnus Kristian Bild Swedish	Service Desk Analyst
NOK ELEVATOR (SG_STORE), INC. 11/F Multinational Tower, #23C Pioneer, 0074 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Thanh Duy Nguyen Vietnamese	Non-Import Speaking Dialect-Italian Officer
NOK ELEVATOR (SG_STORE), INC. 11/F Multinational Tower, #23C Pioneer, 0074 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Stanley Wee Ping Chew Malaysian	Non-Import Speaking Dialect-Italian Officer
TEAM TODO SERVICES, INC. 2/SF RCBC Plaza Tower 2, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Thomas Gordon Hadley British	Global Mail Trading Manager
TEAM TODO SERVICES, INC. 2/SF RCBC Plaza Tower 2, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Leong William Hilton American	Executive Officer
TEAM TODO SERVICES, INC. 2/SF RCBC Plaza Tower 2, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Kamal Jolie Bridgewater British	Sales Manager
TEAM TODO SERVICES, INC. 2/SF RCBC Plaza Tower 2, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Alexander Nicholas Williamson British	Planning Cell Manager
ANALYX EXPRESS SERVICES, LTD. UP Ayalaland Court Bldg., 0725 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yihui Sun Chinese	Senior Consultant
ANALYX EXPRESS SERVICES, LTD. UP Ayalaland Court Bldg., 0725 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yijun Deng Chinese	Production Manager
TELETECH CUSTOMER CARE MANAGEMENT (PHILIPPINES), INC. Building F, 5th Corporate Office, 1000 Bay Blvd., Ole Centro Business Park, Roxas City, Pasay City	Donald Joseph Wadsworth, Jr. American	Executive Director, Global Operations
TELETECH CUSTOMER CARE MANAGEMENT (PHILIPPINES), INC. Building F, 5th Corporate Office, 1000 Bay Blvd., Ole Centro Business Park, Roxas City, Pasay City	Thomas John Beech Australian	Senior Vice President, Asia Pacific
NIM BUSINESS SERVICES, INC. GF Sun Life Financial Asia Bldg., 116 Esteban St. Cyberpark, F. Henriquez Jr. Ave., Libis, Quezon City	Kalimuthu Krishnan Indian	Finance and Admin and Payroll Officer

ERRATUM

In the list Material of Notice of Filing of Application for Alien Employment Permit published on March 30, 2012, the position of Mr. Sheng Wang of Hicentric Corporation should have been read as Online Market Executive, and not as published.

If you have any information/opinion to the above-mentioned applicants please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. ALAN B. MACAWARAYA JR.
Regional Director

(PIA - Apr. 14, 2012)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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Republic of the Philippines
Province of Sorsogon
MUNICIPALITY OF PRIMICIAS DEAN
Pangpangan, Sorsogon
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY TO BID AND BID

The Municipality of Primicias Dean invites PHILGEPS registered Supplier/Manufacturer/Contractor to apply for the following items:

Name of Items	Approved Budget for the Contract	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	Price of Bid Documents (Non-refundable)
NO BID		April 30, 2012 1:30 PM	
1. Construction Materials	880,347.00		500.00
2. Rescue Equipment and Equipment	850,000.00		1000.00
3. Office Supplies and Materials (Printing)	710,000.00		1000.00
4. Office Supplies and Equipment	710,000.00		1000.00
BID			
1. Commodities	745,000.00		1000.00
2. Construction Materials	845,000.00		1000.00
3. 1 Unit Mobile Health Facility (6x4 4x4	4,500,000.00		1000.00

Interested bidders may obtain bid documents at the General Services Office, Municipality of Pangpangan, Primicias Dean. Bidders' eligibility shall be verified during the bid opening. Upon payment of a non-refundable amount indicated above.

Please address your queries to the General Services Office. Contact person: ATTY. ARNEL M. ARTAJO, JR. Telephone No. (056) 7740004

The Municipality of Primicias Dean reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) ARNOLFO A. ESMOJAR
BAC Chairman

(PIA - April 14, 2012)

BUSINESS

Regulator steps up effort to protect consumers

BSP initiates campaign to minimize fraud

By Michaelle V. Ramos

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is embarking on a campaign to fully protect consumers from those engaging in financial scams.

The BSP said it would conduct more financial education seminars to help consumers distinguish between products investments opportunities and those that are fraudulent.

Johnny Noe Ravalo, managing director of the central bank and head of its financial and consumer affairs group (FCAG), said the BSP would make consumer protection a more vital part of its function.

Striving for a highly developed financial system entails having sufficient means to protect consumers, Ravalo said.

"Financial consumer protection should now be an integral part of the legal, regulatory and supervisory framework," he explained.

Apart from holding more financial literacy seminars, compelling banks to be more transparent in offering financial products to their customers is another measure the BSP will take to enhance consumer protection.

The BSP recently issued a circular requiring banks to provide their credit cardholders a breakdown of the interest charges and fees imposed on them.

Regulators said the circular should address complaints arising from lack of awareness of consumers about the expenses involved in the use of credit cards for making purchases.

Apart from credit card problems, other complaints filed with FCAG include difficulty in withdrawing funds, interest rates on loans, and frauds of investment products.

The BSP said that one of the basic things consumers must do to avoid financial scams is to exercise caution when being offered too-good-to-be true investment rates by peddlers of financial products, be it deposit or fixed-income investment instruments.

The regulator said many banks had been ordered closed due to unsafe and unsound practices. Also, some bank officials commit fraud by offering investment products that have above market interest rates.

In deciding to enhance consumer protection, FCAG has simply responded to calls from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for regulators to designate a body that will strictly protect consumers' interests, Ravalo said.

"OECD calls for the designation of oversight bodies responsible for financial consumer protection with the necessary authority on FullFill mandates. The international body also encourages the promotion of broad-based financial education especially for vulnerable groups," he pointed out.

According to Ravalo, the OECD will hold its international conference on consumer protection in September, and the Philippines, through the BSP, shall be the host.

The event will be held in Cebu.

Representatives from various central banks and other financial regulatory bodies will convene to discuss ways to improve consumer protection, Ravalo said.

New lease on PSALM life sought

By Amy R. Remo

ALMENDRAS

ENERGY Secretary Jose Rene D. Almendras has urged Congress move to extend the corporate life of state-run Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. by another 10 years to further ease the impact of collecting the debt of power consumers amounting to P1.43 billion.

"I am asking Congress for an extension of 10 years so that the universal charges to be imposed on power consumers will be less than 10 centavos per kilowatt-hour," Almendras said in an interview.

In an application filed earlier with the Energy Regulatory Commission, PSALM sought to recover from all power consumers 10 centavos per kilowatt-hour over a four-year period to cover the payment of stranded contract costs, apart from a 5-centavo per kWh collection over a 15-year period to settle stranded debts. These will be reflected as universal charges in consumers' monthly power bill.

The extension of PSALM's corporate life to 2034, from the original expiry of 2024, will then allow the once-over-time fees to spread the collection of universal charges for stranded debts (UC-SD) and stranded costs (UC-SCC) over a period longer than what had been earlier proposed.

Last year, the Department of Energy submitted a priority bill to extend PSALM's corporate life before the Joint Congressional Power Commission and the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac).

But no decision has been rendered to date.

Almendras has since stressed the necessity of collecting the universal charge for stranded debt and stranded contract costs to help bring down the energy sector's debt.

"Even our children will be paying for this. The power debt was the single largest debt of the (Philippine Republic in previously P821 billion, and now, we have brought it down to P628 billion [as of end-June 2011]," Almendras explained.

Of the P615-billion, Pedro's total liabilities assumed for the bulk with P507.09-billion; National Power Corp., with P99.63 billion; and National Transmission Corp., with P66.48 billion.

Of the total amount, outstanding liabilities come to about P734.24 billion, while sovereign guarantees amounted for the remaining P180.09 billion.

PNR dead in its tracks

By Apolonio G. Ramos
Contributor

A VITAL factor in enhancing the economic development of our country is a modern railway system for Luzon. The Philippine National Railways is in its death throes and resources applied towards its resurrection is tantamount to investing in a sinkhole.

It originated when Don Edmundo Soler, an Englishman, was awarded the concession for the Manila-Dagupan line on Jan. 21, 1887. Subsequently, the concession was transferred to the Manila Railroad Co. (MRR) in London.

MRR inaugurated the first 195-kilometer railway service from Manila to Dagupan, Pangasinan, on Nov. 26, 1892, under Spanish rule. With the American occupation, the Philippine company of New Jersey built 792.2 kilometers of new lines from 1902 to 1935. Suffering serious financial losses, the English owners sold the railway system to the US government for P6 million in cash and P13.5 million in bonded indebtedness.

COMMENTARY

Extended

In 1929, the railway was extended to San Fernando, La Union. During the Commonwealth period, President Manuel L. Quezon extended the line to Legazpi, Albay.

Before retreating to Bataan in December 1941, USAFFE (2C Gen. Douglas MacArthur ordered the destruction of locomotives, rolling stocks, shop equipment and other facilities. The rapid advance of the Japanese forces prevented the planned destruction of the system. Filipino personnel continued to operate the railway under Japanese supervision.

After Liberation, damage was estimated at P30 million. The US government granted a measly P1 million for war damage. This threadbare compensation hardly made a dent in the reconstruction of the damaged railway.

On independence day July 4, 1946, the Philippine government inherited P20 million in the system. This was hardly enough to get the railway back on its feet, resulting in a loss of P13.1 million in 1953.

However, President Ramon Magsaysay approved the reinvestment, handling and operations in 1954. For the first time in 16 years, MRR declared a net profit of P0.83 million in 1956. This coincided with the conversion from steam to diesel-electric operation.

After this, the MRR began to fare money again. In 1964, MRR was renamed Philippine National Railways. The downhill continued. Since 1966, rehabilitation was shortened basis, backed by loans from OECF/general funds.

The PNR should be privatized. The government should relinquish its hold on the vast land railway system. A privately owned railway is the superior to one owned and operated by the government.

Superior

Three companies is far superior to one owned and operated by the government. Three companies or consortia will each build and operate one of three main lines, inclusive of spur and connector lines. The three main lines are the Southern Tagalog and Bicol Line; the Cagayan Valley or Northeastern Sector; and the Southern Tagalog and Bicol Line.

From a Grand Central Station in Quezon City, the three lines will radiate towards their end points, i.e., Pagbilao, Bicol, Santa Cruz, Laguna; Aparri, Cagayan for the Cagayan Valley Line; and Matnog, Sorsogon for the Southern Tagalog and Bicol Line. Spur and connecting lines will be established.

The Standard Railroad Gauge (1.435 mm) should be adopted over the present Cape Town Gauge (1.067 mm), resulting in an increase in the gap between rails by 238 mm (14-1/8"). The Standard Gauge measures 4'-8-1/8" between rails. It is universally used, carries heavier loads, sustains higher speeds, and is safer to negotiate curves.

Stronger and firmer rail beds should be installed, along with heavier and larger 40-lb rails on all main lines.

Power sources

One-way tracks are dedicated to uni-directional travel and double tracks allow two trains to pass each other any time, avoiding collisions. The double track system prevents delays when a train waits for another train is expected to arrive on the same track. While waiting, it is shunted to an idle track.

There are three sources of power for locomotives to choose from: diesel-electric, electric, and natural gas. The latter is to stimulate supply in the Philippines.

Our government should get other countries interested in the venture, specially those railroad established and modern railway systems.

The Philippine National Railways is dead in its tracks.

(Apolonio G. Ramos, 87, a resident of Marikina City, is a retired mechanical engineer. He was a former manager at Philippine Railway Company. He interest lies in writing about education, transportation and political events.)

Editor Cesar D. Mangosing
PROPERTY

Top Philippine cities for yuppies

This time property experts name names

By Tess R. Salazar

LAST MARCH 31, before the country went into the Holy Week break, Inquirer Property reminded the 11 top criteria for ideal cities to settle into, according to property analysts.

In that story, Enrique Soriano, Ayalaland property director for real estate and income advisory for Visayas-Mindanao Business Advisory, David Lerchin, country head of Jones Lang LaSalle Lerchin, Ltd Mktg, executive director for asset services, CB Richard Ellis Philippines, and Clara del Carmen Jr., Jones Lang LaSalle Lerchin's head of research, consulting and valuation, explained that for the mid-level, upwardly mobile yuppies, the ideal cities should offer the quality of life that entails the following: uncongested spaces, with the right balance of green/fresh air and cosmopolitan lifestyle; job opportunities; peace and order; proximity to business centers, malls, cultural places, theaters, meetings for intellectual discourse, and hospitals.

Lerchin clarified, however, that, "ideally, a formal survey study should be conducted and a well-defined metric should be in place to rank cities in the Philippines; however, what are mentioned here are only indications and are based from the information that are readily available to us at this time."

So, given these conditions, what are these cities liveable cities for the young generation? Here they are, in no particular order:

■ Cebu (Metro Cebu)

The "Queen City of the South" is Soriano and Ayala's top pick, and Cordero's fifth. They explain that in Metro Cebu, the investments and opportunities are pouring in due to its strategic location. Cordero said that "similar to Davao, the manufacturing should be equally improved to ensure sustainable and efficient growth of various sectors (infrastructure, crime prevention and ability to service the basic needs in the long run)."

Alabat picked Cebu as a second option (the young professionals like him to settle in). He described Cebu as "cosmopolitan enough to be interesting for someone from a big city with a booming local economy, and vibes, pieces of job options. The cost of living seems to be lower than in Manila, as well. Traffic is an issue, but still better than in Metro Manila."

He added that Cebu is also a good jumping point to other places of interest like Iloilo, Bohol and Cagayan de Oro. "The international airport is also a plus. They also have good schools and nearby beaches."

■ Tagaig (particularly Bonifacio Global City)

Tagaig, and in particular BGC, is Soriano's third pick, while BGC is Lerchin's top choice. Lerchin said BGC is a prime example of an ideal city. He said that in BGC, "you have everything one needs, full of symmetry and balance of development, and mature, looked up by strong infrastructure and strong policies and strong owners." BGC, he said, has the following qualities: the city chic, new buildings, sporty lifestyle and an international community.

BGC is Cordero's second pick due to its "world-class design for infrastructure (controlled development density, underground facilities, transportation and sustainable designs and practices (i.e., recycling of non-potable water), presence of advanced energy-centers)."

■ Makati

The city that is home to the financial heart and soul of the Philippines is Cordero's top pick, mainly for being the "traditional business district where most businesses thrive and mature (property developments are located)."

Makati is Soriano's second and most ideal location, and Lerchin's third, mainly because of the Alabang Business District. Lerchin said: "Combining the Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang and Filinvest Corporate City, this really was the first five-star mixed-use development in the country."

He added that the Alabang district has been around for about 20 years and truly brings people from all walks of life and integrates them seamlessly.

Lerchin added that the principles for Alabang are: Property values are the cheapest, and present the best value for money. It also has the highest ratio of open spaces to developed land with its various parks and convention areas. The air is cleaner and the location has the most greenery (plants and trees).

■ Clark Special Economic Zone

Though not a city, CSEZ, according to Soriano, deserves special mention and that takes "its sixth spot. Makati and Cordero also names Clark (third). The latter particularly specified the Clark Subic corridor mainly for "the availability of developable land, as well as superior level of infrastructure links (air, land and water transport)."

■ Santa Rosa, Laguna

Not just a place for "overlanders," Santa Rosa is making a name for itself as the Line City of South Luzon, and has become top of mind among investors, as it plays host to the thriving Laguna Technopark and other satellite cities and posh subdivisions. Santa Rosa is Soriano's fourth most ideal city, and Makati's sixth.

■ Tagaytay City

Twenty minutes upland of Santa Rosa is the popular summer destination of Tagaytay, where Soriano said he would someday want to relocate to. "Tagaytay represents all the key quality of life elements, from lifestyle to wellness and access to arts and culture, medical services, and world-class education in his area, to cool-down city."

■ Davao City

Davao City is Soriano's fifth. Makati's second, and Cordero's fourth. Their reason: "The relatively secure environment has been attracting investors to the city (although) major infrastructure projects should be implemented in the nearest possible time to address concerns such as traffic and excessive flooding)."

■ Pasay (particularly Bay City)

Bay City (the contraction of what's to the SM Mall of Asia) is Lerchin's second pick. The SM-mini-city for sale, is the "ultimate success story of a district that started with nothing but a dream, and rose to the most famous growing district in the Philippines; having not just office and retail and residential, but massive events venues to showcase the best the country has to offer."

Other cities mentioned by the analysts were Baguio (Soriano's sixth, Mott's fourth) and Iloilo (Soriano's seventh, and Mott's fifth).

Much in those above-mentioned cities can head and shoulders above their counterparts, Cordero notes "it is still very hard to assess relative to each. Or for good, since these areas still have a wide room for improvement, and each offers unique features that would appeal to my diverse needs."

So, what is your ideal, most livable city?

Next: Inquirer Property readers' wants their favorites.

E-mail the author at tsalazar@inquirer.com.ph.

IMMERSED: Cebu, the investments and opportunities are pouring in due to its strategic location. AJ SANTOS

MAKATI is considered the traditional business district where "most businesses thrive and mature, property developments are located." ALEX MACASIO

HOME KONG elevated walkways improve circulation routes. They are connected to outdoor elevator walkways in some parts, and integrated with retail outlets. LIAM JAMES DOYLE, ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

Green transport

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amanda de Jesus

HONG KONG is a popular tourist destination. The spirit of Hong Kong coming from emigrants determined to work and sustain a better quality of life is what made it a major financial center.

Hong Kong is admirable in the sense that only 20 percent of its transport energy is used by private cars. Its per capita energy usage is only about one-fourth of Singapore. Hong Kong's mass transit system, daily ridership amounts to a third of the population.

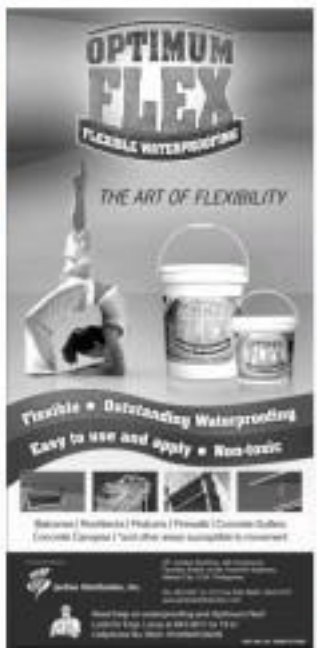
Nearly half of its land area which is almost double that of our National Capital Region is covered by country parks. The high-rise jungle of this cubic-type city has been using the catch-phrase environmentally sustainability since the late 1990s.

Public transport systems

Over 10 million passenger journeys are made daily on public transport systems including high-capacity railways, trams, buses and taxis. There are 200 licensed public transport vehicles for every kilometer of road, and some 300 bus routes in operation. Hong Kong's MTR or Mass Transit Railway provides more than 2-million journeys a day for its 7 million population.

It is no wonder that energy used for transport in Hong Kong represents 35 percent of all energy used and is the highest.

MORE B4.1



SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Mangosing
Tel. 02 896 6000 local 3307
E-mail: pi_science_health@yahoo.com.ph

Keeping our voice in tip-top shape

By Charles E. Ibñez

THE STORYBOOK success-of-eight-time Grammy winner Adele took a terrifying turn last year when the 23-year-old British singer-songwriter was diagnosed with a polyp in her vocal cord that had hemorrhaged.

After undergoing a potentially voice-ending throat surgery in November, she spent weeks recovering under orders to not speak or sing.

Fortunately, this was no her title as Adele eventually returned to center stage last February—her successful rendition of her smash hit, "Rolling in the Deep," as the 2012 Grammy Awards was hailed as a triumphant return.

But not everyone will be so fortunate as Adele and the doctor must realize that our duties have to be a professional singer with chart-topping hits to suffer the same injury, informed Dr. Winfred Hernandez, Chair of the Philippine Academy of Laryngology and Phoniatrics, a subspecialty group of the Philippine Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (PSO-HNS), which spearheads the April 16 celebration of the World Voice Day here in the Philippines.

Wake-up call

Adele's career woes should serve as a wake-up call to everyone—including broadcasters, preachers, teachers and other individuals who do a lot of public speaking—that the voice has to be taken care of properly" reminded Dr. Cesar Anthony Fabie, president of PSO-HNS.

The disease showed that problems involving the vocal cords are way more common than what most people think and they affect not only singers.

Indeed, it is not unusual for us to learn of other people who get too emotional about issues involving their down-to-earth conditions of their voice. It is in many instances, a number of them have even considered a career change after struggling so much in their search for a solution.

Good news

But there is good news. Like Adele, with proper treatment, people suffering from voice disorders can return to their own center stage, whether that's inside a church sanctuary classroom or behind a rostrum.

"Remember, one and ways to restore injuries are part of the focus of the society's upcoming World Voice Day events," Dr. Danilo Feliciano, VP of PSO-HNS, said. He informed that the World Voice Day started to observe years ago in Brazil after the World Health Organization had printed out an especially high rate of laryngeal cancer in that South American country.

World Voice Day in the Philippines was first celebrated in 2006 and since then has provided PSO-HNS a perfect forum whereby its members can refamiliarize with the latest advances in laryngology and voice care, and educate its colleagues, patients and communities through lectures, free voice screenings, community outreach programs and other offerings.

While catching a common cold virus that causes laryngitis may be regarded as one of the leading cause of why our voice may sound hoarse or abnormal from time to time, the PSO-HNS cited other conditions and how to keep our voice in tip-top shape:

1 **Drink plenty of water.** This can help your voice function better because your vocal cords must be well-lubricated to vibrate with the least amount of friction. Avoid alcohol and caffeine (both drains the body of water) and expand our loss of water-rich foods: apples, pears, watermelon, peaches, melons and grapes.

2 **Don't smoke, or if you still do, quit.** Smoking raises the risk of throat cancer tremendously, and inhaling smoke—even second-hand smoke—can irritate the vocal cords.

3 **Try not to scream or yell.** There are abusive practices for your voice that put a lot of strain on the lining of your vocal cords.

4 **Use a microphone.** This is probably the best solution to prevent screaming or yelling when giving a speech or presentation.

5 **Warm up your voice before heavy or prolonged use.** Most people know that singers warm up their voices before a performance, yet many don't realize that this same exercise could be useful to teachers, preachers, politicians and salespersons. Warm-ups could be simple, such as gentle humming exercises, lip or tongue trills and breath-stimulating exercises like "ya-ha-ha-ha-ha" with a release in between each note.

6 **Take a good breath support. Slowly flow genuine your voice** as take time to fill your lungs before starting to talk. Don't wait until you are almost out of air before taking another breath to power your voice.

7 **Listen to your voice.** What your voice is complaining to you by resorting to get hoarse? Listen to it. Modify and decrease your voice if you become hoarse so that will allow your vocal cords to recover. Nothing your voice when it's already hoarse can only lead to more serious problems. If your voice is frequently hoarse, see a doctor. Any such condition for an extended period of time, are an otolaryngologist (one that specializes in health issues affecting the ear, nose, throat and neck) who could do a proper evaluation.

8 **Use a mouth spray that relieves soreness and irritation** of the mouth and throat. One mouth spray, known as Gentillmen-M (Ferrels Philippines), is an effective over the counter remedy for sore, dry and itchy throat commonly prescribed by doctors. Gentillmen-M contains the natural anti-inflammatory properties of chamomile with the antibacterial effect of seven essential oils (sage, thyme, pine needle, peppermint, bergamot, anise, clove and methyl salicylate).

9 **Avoid clearing your throat** too often. Clearing your throat is like slamming your vocal cords together and could eventually lead to a hoarse voice. Instead, sip water or swallow to quench the urge to clear. If clearing of your throat becomes too annoying, have an expert check you for conditions such as acid reflux disease, allergy or sinus conditions.

10 **Allow yourself several days of vocal rest** if you will be speaking for longer periods. For instance, teachers should avoid speaking during the breaks between classes and find quiet ways to spend the rest period rather than conversing with other people.

Transformative forgiveness

MEDICAL FILES
Rafael Castillo, M.D.

A WEEK after Holy Week, it would be an oppressive duty to talk about forgiveness. It is one of the positive emotions that can help give rest, not only peace of mind, but also good health. It can have such a transformative effect that when collectively done, it can be healthy for the nation as well.

There are no large clinical trials as establish the health benefits of forgiveness. But a number of small studies have demonstrated that it can decrease anxiety, depression and grief, anger and negative thoughts, and vulnerability to substance abuse like smoking, alcohol and drugs.

Here and again, we encounter patients complaining of all sorts of symptoms such as high blood pressure, palpitations, upset stomach, appetite problems, insomnia and other sleep disturbances, irritability and mood swings, either loss or excessive gain in weight, and various symptomatic complaints that the physician can't localize to any specific organ of the body.

Longstanding grudges

When laboratory tests, the results are usually unremarkable, with probably a few minor abnormalities which are not significant enough to cause all the symptoms the patient is complaining of. In most of those patients, there is an underlying emotional problem like long-standing grudges.

In a clinical study conducted by Prof. Charlotte Vrooste Witvliet, investigators have noted that heart rates and blood pressures were 2 and a half times higher when participants held grudges and did not forgive the object of their grudges. When asked to focus on their grudges and the persons involved, the participants were observed to sweat more with lower eyes and blood pressures rising, too. All other parameters showed that their nervous systems were on edge. On the other hand, participants who said they had forgiven whoever wronged them felt more calm and in control, based on the observation of the researchers.

Several other studies—including those in young college students and old retirees—have validated these adverse stress responses caused by hurtful memories and an unforgiving feeling. When subjects were encouraged and taught to learn thinking forgiving thoughts, the stress responses were diminished, and the study participants consistently felt much better.

Emotional distress, which undergirdstress is likely to produce, can produce toxic substances—called inflammatory hormones—that can cause harm and injury potentially to all organs including the brain, heart, stomach and kidneys. The more act of forgiveness markedly relieves this.

Prof. Frederic Luskin, a Stanford psychologist, studied the healing effects of forgiveness, and he has defined it as "the moment to moment experience of peace and understanding that occurs when an injured party's suffering is relieved by the process of transforming a grievance they have held against an offending party."

He clarifies that forgiveness does not mean forgiving abruptly. It also does not mean pardoning, condoning or giving the impression that the offensive behavior is acceptable. It does not entail forcing oneself to simply forgive. One must accept and acknowledge whatever negative emotions one feels, and figuratively let them go for true forgiveness to happen and its healing effects experienced.

Forgiveness is basically an internal process that is solely dependent on the one giving it, and not on any other person. It is a gift one gives the offender, and does not require acceptance of the act by the other party. Psychotherapists say that it is more a gift to the one who gives it than to the one it is given to. Unforgiving bitterness only results in more serious negative impact, not only on the mental health of the one who refuses to forgive, but on their physical health. A more depressed immune system has been observed in those individuals making them more prone to cancers, infections and other diseases.

Liberating to the soul

When one talks of liberating emotions, forgiveness tops the list. It can truly be as liberating to the soul. It does not mean that acts or vicious crimes should be forgiven and forgotten. The offender(s) should still be made to pay for their offenses. The aggrieved persons should however make the decision to move forward, and let go of the burning feelings and emotions. Forgiveness releases all the negative emotions associated with not forgiving. When one does not forgive and continues to hold onto the pain of an injustice done, one allows the past injustice to continue to hurt him or her.

We should practice forgiving not only individually but also collectively as a nation. A true national transformation can only be possible by forgiving and praying for our leaders, giving them the benefit of doubt sometimes. Endlessly criticizing them will only pull us down further as a nation. We can still be national activists for social issues but we can strengthen our desire to pave the way for positively meaningful changes to happen in our national government with an attitude of transformative forgiveness. When we shall have attained this, we're ready to assume our role as a leading nation in this part of the world.

Majority rules

DOMINO TOWN (most recent family get-together, when you until kids to an older relative such as an aunt or grandparent, chances are you either kissed their cheek or pressed their hand to your forehead. The method of greeting you used depended on which behavior you learned as a child watching your parents, siblings and cousins saying hello to other family members.

A recent study led by German researchers suggests that social behaviors such as greetings are an example of things people learn to do because "everyone else is doing it." What their work suggests, the study authors said, is these behaviors can be picked up at a very early age.

"I think few people would have expected to find that two-year-olds are already influenced by the majority," said study author Daniel Haun of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and Psychology in a statement. "Parents and teachers should be aware of these dynamics in children's peer interactions."

Series of tests

People aren't the only ones who learn to copy the social behaviors of the majority; other studies have shown that other primates such as chimpanzees can also be influenced by what others in their social group are doing. To learn more about how the majority can influence social behaviors, the researchers conducted a series of tests on a group of two-year-old children, and compared their results to those from other youngsters and chimpanzees.

The tests devised by Haun and his colleagues involved having the children and monkeys watching a small group that represented the "crowd" dropping balls into a box that had three sections, each painted a different color. Three of those groups members acted as the "majority," and they all dropped the balls they earned into the same section of the box, receiving a treat each time. The fourth member of the group, however, was trained to like a different section of the box, and also received a reward after dropping balls into that particular area.

Influenced by the majority

After watching the demonstrations, each of the children, orangutans and chimpanzees was allowed to go to the box and drop three balls in. The researchers found that the children and chimps favored copying the majority's actions, dropping their own balls into the same-colored sections of the box that those others before them had done. The orangutans however, didn't seem to be influenced by the demonstrations, preferring to randomly drop balls into different sections of the box.

A second set of experiments involving a different group of children, chimpanzees and orangutans was done involving the same box. This time the study participants got to watch a person—the other drop three balls into the same section of the box, or one just drop a single ball in a section of the box. As had happened in the previous test, most of the children repeated the action they saw the most, in this case choosing to drop their balls in the same section of the box as that those others before them had done. The orangutans however, didn't seem to be influenced by the demonstrations, preferring to randomly drop balls into different sections of the box.

A second set of experiments involving a different group of children, chimpanzees and orangutans was done involving the same box. This time the study participants got to watch a person—the other drop three balls into the same section of the box, or one just drop a single ball in a section of the box. As had happened in the previous test, most of the children repeated the action they saw the most, in this case choosing to drop their balls in the same section of the box as the model had done. Both the chimpanzees and orangutans displayed no preferences, suggesting that they were not influenced by the monkeys' behavior.

The team offered a possible explanation in their conclusion as to why the children tended to follow behavioral examples set by others. In his statement, Haun said that this human tendency to go with the flow may have developed because it was easy for people to pass on "relatively safe, reliable and productive behavioral strategies."

The study was published online April 12 in the journal Current Biology.

E-mail the author at mssist@msn.com

DISCOVER

Maysie Santos Nadres

Cough relief sans the risk: Plant-based remedies safe, effective

NOT WOULD have thought that unassuming plants and herbs that grow in our backyard or landscaped areas could, million-peso industry one day? Clinical studies proving phytomedicines' (or plant-based drugs) efficacy and growing consumer trust and patronage have created a huge market for such natural-based remedies. As a result, big pharmaceutical companies in the Philippines have begun to aggressively develop new products from indigenous sources.

Sales figures from Lagundi-based cough medicines alone, rose from P38 million in 2004 to an astounding P500 million in October 2011, Pascual Laboratories (PascualLab), the first pharmaceutical company to develop and market the first licensed herbal medicine in the country, accounts for 90 percent of this figure thanks to its Ascof Lagundi brand, the most successful phytomedicine in the Philippines.

Ascof was the first herbal medicine licensed by the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development and the Department of Science and Technology. It was introduced by PascualLab in 1986 in collaboration with the National Integrated Research Program of Medicinal Plants, the government institution that undertakes research on herbal plants for medicinal purposes.

Today, PascualLab has its own Herbal R&D and Product Development group which collaborate with independent medical and research institutions in the country to continuously improve its products. Innovations that the company has implemented in over two decades have resulted in the Ascof that it is today—having higher quality than products produced using an older technology.

The brand has since then become synonymous to cough and sore relieving that is anchored on scientific foundations, all-natural ingredients and PascualLab's heritage that is respected by consumers and the industry as a whole.

The company grows tremendous the annual that only organically grown and 100-percent natural lagundi leaves are used in the formulation of Ascof, making it the superior brand in the market. It has an all-organic, award-winning 45-hectare Lead Agri Corp. plantation in Silang, Cavite that is free of all pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and other chemicals. It is a vast herbal repository where the best and high quality medicinal plant varieties are nurtured. Lagundi leaves used in Ascof come from here, carefully processed before being packaged into capsule, tablet and syrup forms.

But in the midst of all the buzz on phytomedicines, Ascof Lagundi may be confused with herbal or food supplements. It is categorized as a medicine developed through years of scientific research and validated by clinical trials. Its FDA-LTO registration number shows that Ascof is the first phytomedicine registered under the Food and Drug Administration.

Trusting Ascof is an easy decision for Filipino households to make because it has proven useful in solving their loved ones' cough problems, keeping them safe from further health risks.

Idyllic resort offers pure bliss for the summer

By Theresa S. Sarsaniego

SHANGRI-LA, by definition, depicts of an imaginary land—a remote, beautiful and idyllic hideaway where life approaches perfection and eventually nirvana.

And many such stories and movies have been spun in an attempt to create, paint or even sketch a faint representation of what this "utopia" is or should be.

Fairly close enough, Shangri-La's Boracay Resort and Spa, come to its name, has since provided local and foreign tourists with a true and calming hideaway that allows the weary soul to bask and experience a life almost approaching paradise.

SUMMER GETAWAY

Located in a secure, beachfront area overlooking two breathtaking white sandy bays on the picturesque island of Boracay, the resort is the first and only five-star international hideaway resort to open on the famed island.

The resort, which opened in March 2009 and merely a 45-minute flight from Manila, was able to raise and introduce a new level of luxury in the beautiful island of Boracay.

"The luxury of first-class facilities and entertainment goes beyond the resort and is extended to guests on their journey to the island.

Shangri-La's Boracay Resort and Spa has refined what used to be a tedious series of air, land and water transfers to an unrivaled experience of comfort and exclusivity," the company claimed.

Shangri-La's Boracay explained that upon landing at the Caticlan airport, guests are received by a representative, escorted to the cruiser, led to a private lounge where refreshments and other welcome amenities await. After which, guests are escorted to the exclusive jetty port area and whisked off by Shangri-La's speedboat for a 15-minute cruise to the resort.

Upon entry to the resort, one is able to see meticulous and delicate planning that the resorts' architects and designers have applied and which have made the place all the more special and heavenly. The resort's architect is Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo (WATG) and the interior design was created by LTW Design Works.

THE OCEAN view beyond the lobby evokes grandeur as guests walk into the main entrance from the Porte Cochere.

VILLA Suites has two bedrooms, a private lap pool, a pergola for outdoor dining, an outdoor shower and a daybed for relaxation.

THE TREEHOUSE Villa's master bedroom is surrounded by glass windows that provide a panoramic seascape.

According to Shangri-La's Boracay, the resort is comprised of 219 rooms, including 36 villas and suites. "Every guestroom offers a spacious floor plan and ocean views from a private balcony or terrace, or lanai.

"Bathrooms have rainfall showers and all other villas have private pools. Villas also include a day bed for relaxation or massage," it explained.

Interior, exterior design

More than just incorporating Philippine culture in both the interior and exterior design of the resort...from the Abaca weave rugs in the resort lighting made of local capiz shells—guest rooms and suites are also equipped with modern conveniences such as flat-screen TVs, CD/DVD players and iPod dock, a writing desk and complimentary Wi-Fi and broadband Internet access.

And for a cozy, sophisticated and peaceful stay, Shangri-La's Boracay offers guests two private beachfronts and an infinity pool as well as a myriad of leisure facilities and recreational activities such as a fully equipped health club, outdoor free-form swimming pool, outdoor lap pool, massage center and dive shop, water sports pavilion, entertainment center, adventure zone, nature trail, snorkeling, scuba diving and biking.

"Those looking to soothe weary senses, according to Shangri-La's Boracay, can head over to CHI, The Spa, where guests can avail of treatments that will rejuvenate and revitalize their body, mind and spirit. The spa village offers 28 private villas, each with bathing facilities, a steam room and a private garden, it explained.

Resort's commitment

But beyond this ultimate pre-mium getaway experience, it is also worth mentioning the resort's commitment to the community and the environment, which has been embedded not just in its culture, but also in the way the resort operates.

"In an island where potable water is a scarce resource, the resort employs its own state-of-the-art reverse osmosis desalination plant. With this technology, the resort is able to treat rainwater and convert it to clean, potable water safe for human consumption," the resort said, adding that "water is also being recycled by the resort's comprehensive sewage treatment system."

Energy conservation measures for the resort meanwhile go far beyond their just using energy efficient light bulbs.

"Technologically advanced refrigerators readers have been fitted into the elevated spaces, which not only evaluate the efficiency of energy usage, but also automatically shut the system in event of power cut or electricity," Shangri-La's Boracay explained.

Indeed, Shangri-La's Boracay Resort and Spa is a perfect summer haven for travelers and beach lovers from all over the world as, the company emphasized, it offers a "luxurious experience that goes well beyond pamper, where environmental protection, community involvement and sustainable living are inextricably woven into every guest's stay."

All for God's glory

IT WAS probably what the masons were thinking as they laid stone after stone to build the Gothic cathedrals of medieval Europe in the 12th century. Gothic structures were designed to bring out feelings of exuberance and of awe. These cavernous interior spaces, the seemingly endless long aisles and the lights from the stained glass windows could only but inspire, at their exteriors, spires reached for the heavens and tried to touch the face of God. In plan, its geometry of interlocking squares, rectangles and triangles are rooted together in perfection, as if achieving the faultless balance and markings of the universe. It had hoped to bring man closer to God.

The Greek prophet and mathematician Pythagoras shared the same sentiments. He believed that music, through notes confined beyond our comprehension, helped mankind achieve his union with God. Like Pythagoras, other Greek mathematicians picked up where the Egyptians' left off: while the Egyptians developed geometric applications through the process, subdividing their land for agricultural purposes, the Greeks considered three forms, numbers and the lines that define them, into scientifically sound numerical equations and formulas for practical use.

DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Isabel Barrengon Asuncion

'Sacred proportions'

The Egyptians developed and designed many of their structures according to their "sacred proportions," the design concept that carried "harmonic geometry" through a progression in numbers. These supposedly follow proportions seen in nature and to be consistent around us. It is known in modern times as the "Fibonacci numbers." The progression starts with the numbers 1, 2 and 3, then adding 2 to 2 (3) then five to three (5), for a series that will run as 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34 and so on. ... Where obtained graphically, Fibonacci numbers produce sums that "Golden Rectangle," which was used as basis for many of the Egyptian structures, and is also represented by the spiral of a nautilus shell.

Many other forms grew out of this proportioning system—circles. And stars furthered—and as people tried to direct more to God, more shapes grew out to be divine.

Geometric proportioning

But going back to the Gothic Cathedrals, their plans made use of simpler geometric proportioning systems developed from working with squares and circles. Based on the ratio of 1:1:2, the square's diagonal was used as the radius of the circle, and the square's side was used as the radius of the circle's quadrant. Other "magic numbers" there is really no formula that can add up to the Divine. And research has shown that the builders, over months from towns for that matter...does not necessarily match with the proportions of the Golden Rectangle.

THE CHARTRES Cathedral, southwest of Paris in France, employs the principles of geometric proportioning using circles and their intersecting points to determine its dimensions or heights in its floor plan.

Perhaps what is more popular by lessons in "sacred geometry" is all outdated thinking. And while Buckminster Fuller, Chuchini Immobility deserves our earthly world and reminds us of His magnificence (and not to forget, the power and strength of the Christian church), nothing draws closer to God...and is more glorious in contribution...than simply trying to emulate Him.

Contact the author through designdimensions@ubi.ph or through our Associate Designer Facebook account.

DMCI Homes' One Castilla Place a true resort-inspired community

By Theresa S. Sarsaniego

THE SCORCHING heat of the humid Philippine summer explains why resort-themed property developments are perfect for this country and are largely appreciated by many.

While there have been many attempts to deliver that mechanic "resort feel," not all developers, however, are able to provide real Filipinos the pleasure of this resort-inspired communities.

Unlike DMCI Homes, which is backed by more than 35 years of construction heritage, and which seems to have mastered the art of delivering property projects that allow Filipinos to experience that "I'm in a resort feeling" living within or having a home like in Metro Manila.

And this is more than evident in DMCI Homes' One Castilla Place development.

Landmark project

In a recent briefing with company officials, DMCI Homes shared why One Castilla Place, a landmark project in the bustling town of Quezon City, is a smart investment and considered the best in its class.

"Aside from creating a space that inspire suburban appeal, this new development era also conceptualized to offer the convenience of living situated in one of Manila's most developed centers," the company said.

Located in Barangay Valencia in Quezon City, the single-structure, low-density, mid-rise condominium-themed high-rise enclave One Castilla Place offers an intimate and tranquil environment with lush landscapes.

It is strategically located near the business hub of Ortigas Avenue and provides close proximity to other places an interest of like schools, hospitals, religious centers, commercial areas, transport hubs and other business districts in the metro.

A true resort-inspired community, One Castilla Place will allow future homeowners to experience genuine resort ambiance and best-in-class amenities.

Like all DMCI Homes development, One Castilla Place showcases a single-loaded corridor and garden arenas and will offer 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units and three will be a balcony in all units. Its unique T-shape design will allow for natural lighting and ventilation.

True value for money

Meanwhile, amenities in the development are also abound as there will be swimming pools, thematic gardens, fitness gym, function hall, entertainment/game room, sky lounge and a day park.

The condominium development, according to officials, will also have standby power generators, provision for CCTV cameras, Wi-Fi in common areas and function spaces with automatic fire sprinkler and suppression system.

And to further make homeowners' life comfortable and convenient professionally trained property management team will take care of the daily community needs, thus allowing for an easy living experience.

"DMCI Homes' commitment to quality workmanship and its intention to deliver only high-standard products and first-class services reflect true value for money," the company concluded.

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Green transport

From page B2

on single-vector usage there.

Transport lanes are low because of the volume of passenger traffic. Bus, minibus (other) and car providers are given land rights over their routes for development.

Aside from the public transport system, city areas in Hong Kong have elevated pedestrian walkways that improve circulation routes. They are connected to outdoor elevator walkways in some parts, and integrated with retail markets. These walkways extend into neighborhoods and residential areas.

Other mass transport systems

Singapore's mass transit system daily ridership is equal to half of the city-state's total population.

Jakarta has dedicated lanes for its Bus Rapid Transit System. Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur mass transit system ridership is similar to Manila's, which is below 10 percent of population.

It is notable that Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur motorized travel is around 20 percent compared to Manila's 84 percent.

Population

Manila's population is growing just like any Asian city. Half of all travel today is in Asia. The economy in Asia is driven by consumption because of our healthy population growth.

The first four-fifths of Philippine population is below 44 years of age in a pilot fusion, even if our total fertility rate has declined from 6 children in 1975 to 3 today. At that rate we will be at replacement level in 2025.

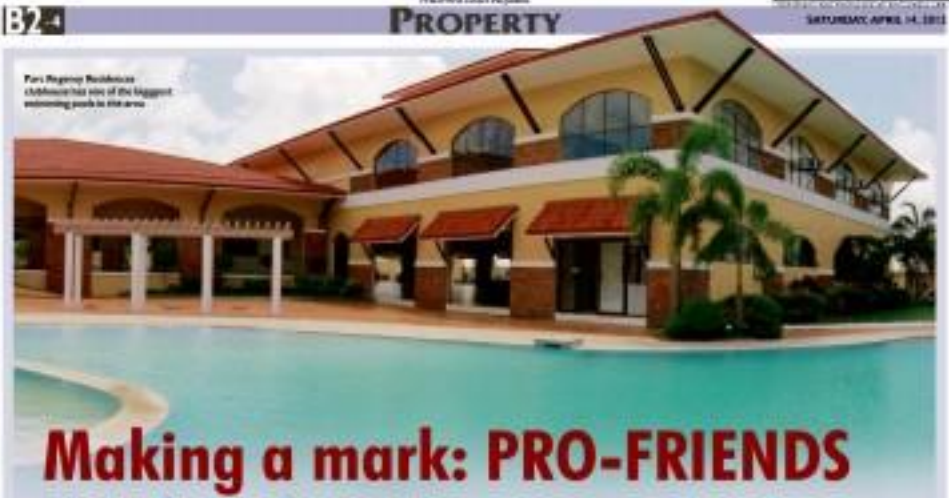
Total fertility rate of 2.1 is equal to replacement level. That means a woman of reproductive age having 2.1 children will not contribute to population growth because two children will only replace their parents when they die. Point one represents women with no children. This is where our legal population control policy (or our number of children) per family is visibly going down.

Metro Manila's land area of 620 square kilometers and 11 million inhabitants, has a population density similar to Shanghai, Taipei, Seoul, Jakarta. Hong Kong has only 6,300/sq km population density.

The Philippines' second most densely populated region Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) has some 12.6 million inhabitants in the region's land area of 16,800 sq km. Manila can decongest with a good mass transport system.

This will help in being down carbon emissions of 39 percent from transport.

For comments or inquiries, email arnulodejesus@gmail.com



Parc Regency Residences clubhouse has one of the biggest swimming pools in the area

Making a mark: PRO-FRIENDS one of the fastest growing developers

By Theresa S. Samaniego

THE REAL measure of a truly successful and trustworthy property developer lies in its ability to break barriers and reach out to every hardworking Filipino.

After all, putting up communities and developments should not just be regarded simply as a money-making business, but also as an avenue to allow more Filipinos a chance to realize their right to having a decent home and a quality living experience. And this is exactly what Property Company of Friends, Inc. (PRO-FRIENDS) has been doing for over a decade—offering houses that give the best value for one's money.

PRO-FRIENDS, one of the fastest growing real estate firms, went beyond norms by being among the pioneers in offering more affordable and innovative housing developments to a wider range of clients way back in 1999.

As it has proven itself to be a trustworthy developer—one that can deliver more than what was promised—PRO-FRIENDS has since grown its portfolio, expanded its reach and improved the developments of its communities, moving from small-scaled subdivisions to the bigger estate projects, catering across market segments.

"We have 36 on-going developments and 53 finished projects. Most of these are in Cavite, because in Metro and core provinces will be opening in Pampanga soon," PRO-FRIENDS Corporate Communications Manager Monica Morales said, noting that the growth of the company is highly evident in the sheer number of projects delivered with just over than a decade of operation.

"Since 1999, we have been catering to the affordable segment. It is only with Belleford Estates that we tapped the mid-income segment. We have thrived in the industry because we invest in research and planning, enough to be able to provide the market a wide array of choices that will suit their needs," Morales explained.

"We also take pride in the well-appointed spaces of our house models that afford our buyer a time-tested home for less than a million," she added.

In Cavite, PRO-FRIENDS has Lancaster Estates and Carmona Estates where housing units are priced between P800,000 and P3 million, as well as the Belleford Estates, where units range from P2 million to P6 million.

In Iloilo, the company has Parc Regency Residences (P1.4 million to P1.6 million) and the Monticello Villas (P850,000 to P1.1 million).

"We strive hard to provide future residents a safe and secure gated community with lifestyle amenities that not only suit their needs, but can also transform and improve their day-to-day lives," Morales noted.

For instance, the new 600-hectare Lancaster Estates, an expansive development that offers bigger and more spacious townhouses and single attached units, provides homebuyers with modern conveniences. According to PRO-FRIENDS, this was achieved by designing the community to have its own commercial complex, a transportation terminal, a gas station, a church (Church of the Holy Family) and its own school, the St. Edward Integrated School, which is set to begin its first school year this coming June.

The school, Morales noted, is a special investment on its part. It is a testament to its commitment to enhance the future of the child, and through this, enhance the quality of the family's life within Lancaster Estates.

"Building a school inside the estate will not only ensure the safety of the children, but also, as an added perk, save parents money on transportation expenses, without having to compromise the quality of education.

Also, homes at Lancaster Estates highlight huge outdoor spaces, where children can safely play and where get-togethers with families and friends can be held. It likewise has 24-hour security, seven days a week to guarantee worry-free living for residents.

Meanwhile, the European-themed Belleford Estates, located on a naturally hilly terrain, is a 110-hectare pocket development strategically located 20 minutes away from Alabang and very accessible to top-notch schools, banks and hospitals. Carmona Estates is a 60-hectare development, provides home buyers a thriving community which lives in commercial establishments right within the estate.

Currently, PRO-FRIENDS enjoys a very strong presence in the real estate industry, having proven itself to be a trustworthy player who knows not only the real value in doing this kind of business, but also the needs and wants of its clientele.

From being a small player in 1999, PRO-FRIENDS has since soared to greater heights. "The company's rapid growth can be attributed to several factors. For us, it is always about surprising and these motivations are based on constant research and planning. We'd like to think that we grow and change with our market," Morales said.

"The greatest contributor we have is the quality of our houses that are matched with an affordable price point giving more chances to Filipinos to own their dream home," she concluded.

CHURCH of the Holy Family inside the Lancaster Estates community

BELLEPORT features linear park in an extra space behind the houses

AS PART of PRO-FRIENDS transforming lives commitment, the St. Edward Integrated School is now open for SY 2012-2013 at Lancaster Estates

LEFT, Garden Grove house model has an extra space that can be converted to a garden

FAMILY Company, which provided for the residents' housing needs in Lancaster Estates

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Driving destinations to consider this summer

By Charles F. Bolus

THE RECENT long Lenten break must have brought you in far-off destinations along with your family or friends. Such trips must have tested your resolve not only in enduring the long traffic queues but also the whimsies of bored and tired vehicle occupants.

This time, Inquirer Motoring will offer some interesting places that are not only worth visiting but are also just a few hours drive from Metro Manila.

1 Perhaps, nothing is more panoramic than a visit to the heritage town of Tiaong in Batangas. Presented as an alternative to Tagaytay, Nasugbu or Puerto, it only takes less hours—via the scenic route of Tagaytay Ridge and S. Tirador Highway.

I like one that passes by sugar Canyon Woods and Fantasy World—to get to this colonial town that provides a glimpse of how the place looked like during the Spanish colonial era.

Within this town are several national historical landmarks including the ancestral houses of revolutionary heroes Leon Apacible and Marcelo Agoncillo, the Taal Church (Basilica of San Martin De Tours).

While in Taal, why not drop by Villa Tortuga, a restored turn-of-the-20th century bahay na bato that offers visitors a chance to taste Spanish-era cuisines as well as local delicacies like Kalamyasin and Filipino cuisine.

2 An interesting cultural landmark not to be missed is the Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite. Declared a national cultural treasure by the National Historical Institute (NHI) in 1965, it was later leased by a group of students from the Reformed Missionary Baptist Church (RMBC) for 25 years. Aguinaldo's descendants, however, still own the property.

Incidentally, discovered by an Iowa-born Irish-Portuguese Artist Carlos "Botong" Francisco in 1945, it was later leased by a group of students from the Reformed Missionary Baptist Church (RMBC) for 25 years. Aguinaldo's descendants, however, still own the property.

As it was built during the Philippine-American War, the house was made of wood and other light materials for easy transportation in case of attacks by the enemy. Its walls are made of capiz shells and bamboo strips. Its roof is made of nipa and cogon grass.

In 1996, by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 260, the site was declared a national cultural treasure.

DRIVING B2-3

Shooting the BRZ

Hardly an idle moment driving Subaru's thrilling new sports car

Text and photos by Jason R. Ang

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Block's videos, which have been viewed by millions of people around the world, showed that rear-wheel-drive cars can be fun to drive, and that they can be driven fast and safely on the road.

Subaru's BRZ, which was developed in collaboration with Toyota, is the first rear-wheel-drive car from the Japanese automaker since the Leone was discontinued in 1994. Subaru's all-wheel-drive cars have been the mainstay of the company's lineup for decades, and have been the basis of its rally cars that have won the World Rally Championship.

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With the memory of the launch of the SV compact SUV replete with some bittersweet Grace Lee...still fresh in our memory, we boarded a bus bound for the Singapore Turf Club, to put the BRZ through its paces. Expectations fell on rain, we soon discovered that the test was limited to a small parking lot, so it was back to Bea Swift's playground at the Manila International Auto Show. Showing some promise over the generous presence of bulldozers, spaced rather closely in relation to number.

The BRZ is both a natural offspring of, and an oddball within Subaru's stable. For starters, it does not carry one of Subaru's core technologies: symmetrical all-wheel drive. Instead, it is a rear-wheel driver car. For purer steering and handling response. The other core technology, boxer engine configuration, is very much intact. Indeed, BRZ stands for Boxer engine, Rear-wheel drive, and Z as in Zenith (or perhaps because the car's name just sounds good). The BRZ is a collaboration between Subaru and Toyota, which owns shares in Subaru's parent company and which will get first dibs on selling the car under the GT86 badge.

Powering the BRZ is a naturally aspirated 2.0-liter horizontally opposed (aka boxer) engine, dishing out 200hp. Where Subaru normally bolts on a turbocharger to increase output, sans turning heads, closer to 300hp, the BRZ will certainly remain normally aspirated. The reason: not to maximize the engine's willingness to rev quickly to above 7,000 rpm, to guarantee a proper sports car sound, and to allow the engine to be mounted lower. A turbocharged engine will spool up less quickly, will muffle the sound, and force the engine to be mounted higher due to the plumbing required. Suffice it to say that engineer is personally...this...will be just to get the car decent performance. Zero to 100 km/h is quoted at less than six seconds.

More than boast power, the BRZ pursues parity of response, from the engine to the car's ability to handle handling. In pursuing handling above absolute power, Subaru is following in the tire tracks of the Mazda MX-5 and RX-8: modestly powered sports cars that owner-drivers thought quite agile. Dismissing 200hp Civics 2.0 liters are usually registered a hardly child's play, but it is well matched to the chassis' weight and handling characteristics.

The BRZ's styling, as expected from experts such as Subaru Australia's Jon Hunt, is a mix of sporty and practical. There are a couple of rear seats, suitable for small children or removing your colleagues. The sculpted hood bulges, stopped short, and there are nice touches like the aluminum pedals—a feature usually reserved for a sports car, but there's little of Subaru's ergonomics look to the car. This is all made easy by the intuitive steering, which reveals that Toyota has been responsible for the steering. Subaru's responsibilities run from the engineering. Subaru still owns build the cars in its own factory, just refocusing the "T" badge for the assembly line in the front area.

The emotions for the driver were limited to a sticker, comfortable and supportive seat, and a spin on the dashpod. The sticker counter proved to be the natural habitat of the BRZ. The bright utility blue car changed direction quickly and efficiently, responding to sharp turns of the wheel with no hesitation. Body roll was minimal, and the car's ability to turn in the opposite direction extremely easy engine and egress. The boxer engine's low-hoodle is that it can be mounted low in the chassis, and with a low center of gravity. The car's nimble more stable and responsive.

On the acceleration and braking course, the engine proved willing. The flat-four fed a steady stream of revs to carry us without the sudden kick of a turbocharged engine. Brakes hung well (a feature itself), and the BRZ displayed hardly any brake dive as it stopped into the designated box.

The original, confusing circular lapping with eighteen 0 type course, demonstrated the car's other talents. With the rear-boot and stability control on, the car easily stayed on track, with minimal wheelspin. The chassis didn't need much cornering to deliver ample grip to the drivers. There, with the rear, brake means stretched out, we discovered that the car's power is quite capable of breaking loose the rear wheels, with a very predictable and control-

lable feel even when it entered sliding. We can't wait to test this car on a proper track, where its sharply-honed chassis should shine.

Subaru is preparing just now to invest with the BRZ, hoping its image as a maker of sporty vehicles, while moving its core products into a more refined and perhaps more sedate direction. The BRZ will serve to remind customers, whether or not most of its cars ever behaving more wildly, just what Subaru is capable of.

EXG Extra Grade Oils show what champions are made of

THE SEDUCTION is rising and all ready lead to the conversation about everyone longs for the company of cooling systems and fresh breezes. In short, summer is here and it presents the perfect time to bond with family and friends and produce healthy lifestyle and create unforgettable memories that can last for a lifetime.

Devote your time to your family, the business owners and not worry about your car's performance. Make your date in the sun be fun filled while you have the peace of mind that your family is safe with premium products from EXG Extra Grade Oil.

In business lexicon and corporate settings, the expression "well-oiled machine" pertains to a group of highly efficient and effective individuals who work in synergy to achieve a common goal. In every organization, it is important to be well-oiled machine, the selection process of individuals with varying expertise perfect for the job many be a tedious feat, but it is necessary for success.

It can also mean the same thing for motoring. The motor oil starts out at strategically located holes in the engine to obtain this fluid—in the metal surfaces to ensure a friction free, smooth flowing process. Just like an organization built for success, a vehicle that is meant for the ages must can only rely the best lubricants. However, the number of motor oil brands available in the market may make it very difficult to choose the best for your car engine.

Jimmy Tiongson, a motoring expert, introduces a new line of motor engine lubricants that deal the performance of other low-end brands. "I have been in the automotive industry for the longest time which gave me the edge of coming

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PROMO DURATION: March 1, 2012 to May 31, 2012

Recycled motor oil now used for car racing

Valvoline launches NextGen oils with environmental benefits

MORE than just pieces of product to consider for the prevention of the next disaster.

Valvoline Philippines, a subsidiary of Ashland Inc., and a leading automobile lubricant and motor oil manufacturer, has launched the Valvoline NextGen motor oil, a new line of premium branded motor oil with environmental benefits.

One of all the countries in Asia, Valvoline first chooses to launch the product only in the Philippines.

Made with 50 percent recycled oil, NextGen motor oil is the result of years of continued research, technology and innovation from Valvoline with the oil environment in the oil in refining process. Tried oil is now refined with the same processes as crude oil to create new oil. Valvoline then improves the oil with its award-winning additives (Society of Automotive Engineers International Award for Environmental Excellence in Transportation) to make NextGen oils and industry specifications and match the quality, performance and protection of its regular oils, at the same time reduces environmental impact.

"We, at Valvoline are increasingly concerned about the environmental situations that we experience. Thus, we felt that now is the time for more contribute to the preservation and protection of the environment, which is why we are determined to search for new ways to reduce our carbon footprint and environmental impact. Our long history and proven track record of innovation and leadership puts us in the perfect position to introduce these game-changing motor oil technologies. And with the Valvoline NextGen, it is 50 percent recycled with 100 percent guaranteed Valvoline protection," says Valvoline Philippines country manager Virgilio Martires.

The NextGen line of motor oils uses a mid-ash base for the refining process, used oil free low contaminant and more oil molecules, making it better than crude for making new oil. Processing used oil to new base oil requires less energy, reduces truck oil demand, and produces fewer pollutants. Hudson or refining technologies ensure consistent, state-of-the-art results and remove any chemically altered molecules. In making new motor oil, used oils are better to refining days used oil than 45 percent crude oil, while crude only has 20 per cent usable oil. The new product takes advantage of the latest innovative manufacturing and advanced refining processes that creates 100 percent new oil base stock. The Oil's premier guaranteed Valvoline protection without any base oil. Additionally, proven on the streets of NASCAR, from race tests, Roush Fenway decided to switch to NextGen for their racing cars after a series of tests conducted by independent military-approved regular builders. Roush then last season that included laboratory simulations and numerous full-length race conditions. The proven proved that Valvoline's NextGen technology provides optimal engine protection against the extreme heat, high RPMs and cold-start demands of racing without sacrificing performance horsepower. Recently, Roush Fenway Racing's Greg Biffle and the team's first win of the season at the Daytona 500. The victory signified not only the first Sprint Cup win of the season for Roush Fenway Racing and its 300th NASCAR win victory, but also the first time nothing by switch to Valvoline NextGen. Carl Edwards also won in the Green Cigar 500, driving the Roush Fenway No. 99 National Steel Mustang, to wrench under the checkered flag with the new Valvoline NextGen under the hood. Edwards' No. 99 Ford was the first NASCAR Nextel Cup entry to run NextGen technology in competition. Valvoline NextGen's race-tested formulation under the hood of any car, runs it be on the track or on the highway.

Keep your summer trip cool

IT'S La Niña year with the normal and southern Philippines already experiencing extra heavy and extended rainfall even before the onset of 2012. But summer is expected to remain sweating hot as usual in other parts of the country as temperatures can still expect quite extremely humid road trips due to high temperatures. While this means ensuring reliable car air conditioner, it is also time to check the engine cooling system.

Whether driving during the simmering summer or on rainy days, the car engine heats up just the same and may overheat. The damage inside the engine cooling system can happen anytime or with any weather condition. Motorists who ignore gauge-in-their-cooling system are more likely to experience problems like hose leaks, damage on radiator and parts. Hose leaks really that can damage rubber or metal parts in the cooling system.

An engine cooling system working at its best with the right coolant not only absorbs the heat from fuel combustion and prevents overheating but also keeps its parts chance function efficiently and avoid costly damage. Using only ordinary tap water on your cooling system, while cheap, is not recommended because it really boils at 100°C. And is best to regularly use only dependable Petronas coolant in your radiator which boils between 125°C to 130°C, depending on the concentration. The extended boiling point of the coolant gives car engines longer running power under extreme temperatures.

Many also owners rust and corrosion of metal parts. A buildup of this residue clogs and blocks parts of the radiator and pumps, disrupting the cooling system. Protonic Coolant contains ingredients that are compatible with rubber and metal parts of a radiator, pumps and hoses so it does not cause rust and corrosion. In fact, it contains inhibitors that protect the cooling system metal and aluminum parts from rust and corrosion.

Protonic Coolant is available in two variants - Concentrate or Ready To Use (RTU). Protonic Coolant Concentrate provides motorists with the flexibility to make his preferred blend of coolant and distilled water ranging from 50:50, 60:40, or up to 70:30 dilution. Protonic Coolant Ready to Use, on the other hand, is an affordable **pre-mix coolant, user convenient - no need to add, just pour directly to your cooling system.** Protonic Coolant Ready To Use is ideal for top up during regular maintenance if the coolant level in the reservoir is below the minimum level. It is also recommended to have your cooling system checked annually to maintain a hassle free drive. Annual flushing eliminates the fine particles that have accumulated during travels in different road environments. For Protonic Coolant Concentrate or Ready To Use regularly and enjoy your annual protection from overheating, rust and corrosion for safe driving on the road. Protonic Coolant is compatible with all makes and models of any vehicle.

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2012 Chrysler Town & Country gets even more family-friendly

THE 2012 Chrysler Town & Country receives fresh updates on the dramatic and well-received changes made upon the previous model year. Already infused with innovative technology, unparalleled functionality, classic design, and a long list of standard convenience and safety features, enhancements in refinement make the new Town & Country a true stand-out in the minivan segment.

"The 2012 Chrysler Town & Country is the ultimate realization of the 'from icons Genesis,'" said Saad Chehab, head, Chrysler Brand –Chrysler Group LLC. "For those who've worked hard to provide the best for their families, and who understand that settling down has nothing to do with settling for a minivan. By combining a world-class interior, best 40-class horsepower, optimal driving dynamics and class exclusive see-couch Stow 'n Go seating, the Town & Country embodies the Imported from Detroit ethos—offering style, comfort, and performance—for up to seven passengers."

Improvements in 2012 include standard bodies seating, second and third row overhead 9" video screen, a new Sapphire Blue interior lighting scheme and a continuous leather and wood steering wheel.

No compromise on safety

The 2012 Chrysler Town & Country offers over 40 available safety, security and technology features, providing customers the safety they expect to secure peace of mind when traveling. Standard safety features include: HalfDrive rear backup camera, front seat-mounted air bags, advanced multi-stage driver and front passenger air bags, side curtain air bags for all three rows and electronic stability control, including Brake Assist and all-speed traction control.

In addition to the already extensive safety features of the Town & Country, the new Active Pedestrian Protection system is introduced in the new model. This system, fitted as standard, includes three impact sensors in the front section as well as special bonnet hinges pretensioned and operated by powerful springs. Upon impact with a pedestrian, the sensors send real-time data to the electronic control unit which, in turn, activates two solenoids in the hinges instantaneously. These solenoids release the retainers so that the rear section of the bonnet is pushed upwards by 50 millimeters by means of spring force that takes only but a fraction of a second.

Refinement for the driver

The 2012 Chrysler Town & Country delivers an agile, confident driving experience. Engineers placed emphasis on the driver's experience during evasive handling and emergency maneuvers, making the ride comfortable and ensuring a quieter cabin in the process. The new Town & Country delivers families a fun driving experience, no matter if the driver is the neighborhood carpool, a family vacation or an unbelievable adventure on many roads.

With exquisite styling, a beautifully crafted interior, several safety and technology features, smart, cutting-edge entertainment features and driver seating and storage options, the Chrysler Town & Country delivers on the Chrysler promise to provide every owner a vehicle that satisfies functionality.

Visit the Chrysler showrooms in Alabang, Greenhills and Makati to discover the expanded list safety standards in the new Town & Country firsthand, and find out why over 11 million families worldwide have chosen this minivan.

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SINGAPORE'S constantly evolving skyline runs includes Marina Bay Sands and Singapore Flyer.

With 'Titanic' exhibit as come-on, Singapore is for lovers, too

This interesting show is the hottest ticket–on ground. There are sky-high thrills as well

By Alan T. Vergara

A VISIT to the museum may sound as romantic as a trip to the supermarket's hardware section, but not when it's featuring actual artifacts such as plates, glasses, cutlery, trunks and articles of clothing salvaged more than 70 years later from the ill-fated Titanic (ongoing at the ArtScience Museum until April 29), which sank in frigid waters of the North Atlantic exactly a century ago.

That is really a great come-on in the Marina Bay Sands in Singapore.

Known more for its efficiency, juicy bargains and lush tropical environment, Singapore is probably one of the last places lovers would consider a romantic destination.

Not anymore. Come-on-watch on the Titanic exhibit should be turning Singapore into a romantic destination for couples.

Singapore Tourism Board invited Inquirer Lifestyle to experience the range of possibilities for Filipino couples (see sidebar). Two of its most popular destinations these days are the Marina Bay Sands (www.marinabaysands.com), including the Sands Sky Park and ArtScience Museum, and the Singapore Flyer (www.singaporeflyer.com).

Looming hundreds of feet in the horizon, both attractions have become iconic additions to Singapore's constantly evolving skyline. These, with the city's other more earth-bound attractions such as the Singapore Zoo, Jewel Rajestiseas, Jenkins Island, Sentosa World Singapore, and even the idyllic and serene Mr Singapore River Cruise, offer possibilities for lovers of all ages and persuasions.

One of Marina Bay Sands' attractions, of course, is its Las Vegas-style casino, which came after the first-ever casino complex, Resorts World, in Sentosa Island Singapore. For nongamblers, the hotel and convention center gives options.

They don't even have to be guests in the hotel to gain access to the Sky Park. On the hotel's 57th or topmost floor, the Sky Park has a cantilevered viewing deck that gives sweeping views of Singapore and the islands beyond. For a minimal entrance fee, the couple can pledge their undying love before choosing ideal gifts for each other at the Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands on the ground level.

Undigest boutiques include Gucci, Hermès, Prada, Cartier, Patek Philippe and Louis Vuitton, whose iconic glass-paned store, said to be the brand's biggest outside Paris, just rose this July.

Pop the question

The guy can pop the question in a romantic dinner in any of Marina Bay Sands' celebrity-chef restaurants led by the likes of Mario Batali, Wolfgang Puck,

WITH TITANIC C2

ICONIC Marina Bay Sands and futuristic-shaped ArtScience Museum

INFINITY pool on Sands' SkyPark

With 'Titanic' exhibit . . .

Homepage C1

Guy Savoy, and Singapore's very own Justin Quek.

After watching James Cameron's "Titanic," lovers of all ages are bound to find pieces of interest in the Titanic exhibit. There are over, such magazine licenses exist as bobvic, class distinction and a desire to play God are on full display in the form of insightful pictures, quotes, dramatic lighting and clever juxtaposition of real items, including parts of the supposedly "unsinkable" ship.

More than the presentation of artifacts, one of the show's strengths is its ability to give the collection of salvaged items a human face by identifying who owned which. Almost every vignette tells a story that's bound to make you stop and think and tear up as the memory of those 1,522 souls who didn't make it.

Many of them are nameless, as the show took pains to list the names of those who lived (705 people, mainly in first class) and those who didn't. Don't waste your time looking for the names of Jack and Rose. You're better off tempting to the nearest multiplex to catch "Titanic" in 3D.

An hour in the museum is never enough. There was simply no time for us to walk through a simultaneous exhibit of Andy Warhol's cartoonish and nostalgic (ongoing until Aug. 12) musical production, "Bad."

Marina Bay Sands' other has two state-of-the-art theatres, one of which is the current venue of an Australian production of the Broadway hit musical "Wicked."

Another gravity-defying escape point for lovers is the Singapore Flyer. Singapore's biggest, newest and arguably most modern attraction is the London Eye.

Said to be the biggest observation wheel of its kind in the world, the Singapore Flyer (150 m in diameter; 165 m to height) has 28 glass-and-steel capsules. Each capsule can accommodate as many as 28 people, who, from various elevations, get a bird's-eye view of the entire city, including nearby Marina Bay Sands and Singapore Central Business District. Unless you're deathly afraid of heights, you need not worry as you hastily feel the nice sunset and descent.

For more intimate occasions, lovers can

A FAMILY of orangutans makes an appearance at the Singapore Zoo; below, rule of the wild runs Singapore at Clark Quay JUSTIN QUEK

book an entire capsule in themselves and enjoy bucket and dinner services. There are even wine pairings for the main course consisting of either fish, chicken or meat.

Private room

Or they could share the capsule with other couples. Like an intimate private room, the capsule can accommodate tables for two, but still provide privacy.

It takes the Singapore Flyer 30 minutes to make one full revolution. During this time, the crew brings in dessert and coffee as they unload used dishes. Then the capsule again begins its ascent, then descend for another 30 minutes.

Not a few cars have taken such opportunities to pop the question, said Felvia Wong, Singapore Flyer's publicist. (Each capsule has CCTV camera, for security purposes.)

"There was even a man (the bride) served dinner with the engagement ring hidden somewhere in the main course," said Wong. "All of it, of course, was planned by the secrets between. You could just see how happy she was."

There have also been cases where some couples get a bit carried away, as long as the pair doesn't make a public scandal and are committed of being videotaped, they're generally left alone. Don't get any ideas, though, since such intimate acts aren't encouraged.)

Other sky-bound options are offered by the Jewel Box, Singapore's iconic hilltop destination offering couples several dining options. It's also a more romantic and scenic way to get photos. They could skip the newly built bridge connecting the main island to Sentosa, and instead hop on an enclosed cable car at the Jewel Box to get to Universal Studios and Resorts World.

The opening of these two attractions assures repeat guests of having something new to do at Sentosa, one of Singapore's oldest and most famous attractions. Couples, for instance, could let gravity (again!) do the driving as they race against each other on roaping eye-cars at the Luge racetrack.

FRENCH are giants at the Michelin in every Singapore Flyer capsule.

MER Lion, a symbol synonymous to the city state, guards the mouth of the Singapore River

Or they could spend the dying hours of the day getting a massage at Spa Botanica. (Customary tips even request for Filipino therapists.)

As night falls, they could wrap to Boulevard for the luxury shopping before dinner in any of the casual and fine-dining restaurants like Chinois, a modern fine-dining place serving Chinese food. Just like theme parks in the US, Sentosa now has five-star hotels where guests can stay on the island longer.

To cap a long day of sightseeing, couples could either try their luck in the casinos or catch "Voyage de La Vie," a song-and-dance show with Cirque du Soleil-caliber costumes and special effects at the Festive Grand Theatre. Indeed, what a voyage it has been so far, but the fun has just begun in Singapore.

WHETHER risky cleavage or refreshing crimes at Halia.

Newest u

Dining is an art

SINGAPORE continues quest to elevate dining from While pioneering hi tural roots, it is open-ving ences and trends.

A testament that has tioning discriminating Halia, Malay for ginger, h called from a "marriage" pean traditions and Si flourishes, as "modern pi adventurous per familiar."

Located in a lush area pagoda/Botanic Gardens ginger, Halia and its small events venue dubbed Vill lure the green aficiona their sensitive set of menu panels. In keeping with ginger varieties have ha way into many of its di beverages.

Halia's pan-Asian mind household of French ch spice-Singaporean chef ericism, whose fillipino h also have put talent to 5 Although he has yet to vi ser-tual grandparents' hom ends-dishes in he kind of a enjoying. But he has no pl cluding such Pinoy dishes menu items.

"I still have to learn the cultures and languages bef begin to consider expan dishes and operations," when asked why he chose branch of Halia in Hon Manila.

Another menu addi leisurely and weekend din Michelin-starred pastry ch Thiok Imelda Club, a d away from Singapore's ci the commuter chaos (thes agonize but Gerhard ins resort got its cuisine from owners' per cue.

Bistro cuisine

Like Halia, one of t midale Pastry's cuisine from its modern "bistro" a its green menu consists h also has a side sla desserts, including tasty fol cupcakes made from with ingredients like thy cream. Taste to venture ou

Hotel Fort Canning: Heritage becomes luxury

Its site dating back to the Majapahit era of 14th century, boutique hotel is a perfect example of creative reuse of historic structures

SINGAPORE has again led the way in countries by turning an abandoned British colonial-era administration building into Hotel Fort Canning, a three-story, 86-room (two of which are luxury suites) heritage boutique hotel nestled between Orchard Road, Clark Quay and the city's CBD.

Designed for business travelers and couples, the hotel opened in July after a year of a two-year renovation. It boasts food and beverage outlets, including an Italian restaurant, ballroom, function rooms, state-of-the-art gym, and two swimming pools. Rates start from SGD$6/night for a deluxe room inclusive of breakfast, Wi-Fi, and daily evening drinks at the private lounge (www.hotelfortcanning.com).

The hotel stands out among the city's big, yet and more famous players. The property has manicured gardens and a lush tropical park beyond, and even an outdoor dunded jogging trail that allows health buffs to savor the premises.

Since it's a fairly small property, its friendly staff, including some Filipinos, makes sure you get personalized service. Apart from providing the usual creature comforts, including the novelty of staying in rooms with exposed bathtubs or indoor balconies with glass walls, Hotel Fort Canning is a date with history five other hotels in Singapore can provide.

Built in 1928, the iconic structure located on what was then Government Hill was the administration building of the British Far East Command. Adjacent to it was the governor's residence, where British governors began living with Sir Stamford Raffles, once lived.

Bunker

In front of the hotel is the Battle Box, a fortified bunker where British warriors commander of the Malayan forces, Lt. Gen. Arthur Percival, set up his command. Also in the building's gallery beside rooms, under Percival, handed over the reigns of power to victorious Japanese invaders in 1942.

The building's site has an older history that dates back to the Majapahit kings of the 14th century. Portions of a palace's walls and foundations from pre-colonial Southeast Asia stand in certain sections of Hotel Fort Canning's sprawling gardens.

HOTEL Fort Canning is another green in Singapore's efforts to preserve its historic buildings.

ONE of Hotel Fort Canning's bathrooms within a room

"There's probably no other hotel in town that's situated within a National Heritage Park with a history that dates back to the very beginning of Singapore," said Jeremy Tan, senior associate director of HR Architects, the firm responsible for the building's renovation, in a press release. "Our approach was to celebrate the history of the Hill by enhancing the richness of its heritage."

Responsible conservation and creative adaptive reuse come with a hefty price tag. Property owners led by CEO Oh Chee Eng to generally agree as much as $$70 million for the restoration effort alone. For its pains, Hotel Fort Canning was awarded the prestigious Urban Redevelopment Authority Architectural Heritage Award soon after opening.

Alex S. Fergara

More favorite 'secret' summer destinations

MARIA Flores enjoying cocktails at least at home

Many of them aren't so secret anymore, but they're places to go to for discovery and rediscovery

"For its rich cultural and gastronomic life, Barcelona is, without a doubt, my favorite destination in the world. From cutting-edge architecture and three-star Michelin restaurants to the jaw-dropping Boqueria market and Las Ramblas, Barcelona has everything. One whole month is not enough to experience the many wonders of this city and the rest of tour-by Catalonia.

"In my home country, Colombia, the city of Cartagena has everything the modern traveler craves for: centuries-old Spanish fortresses, beautiful beaches, world-renowned restaurants and an exciting nightlife. Only a short boat ride away from the bustling metropolis of Bocagrande, Cartagena is a favorite destination of the Spanish royalty, movie stars and entertainment icons. You may even see my kababayan Shakira or Gabriel Garcia Marquez enjoying the many charms of this Caribbean jewel of a city.

"Lastly, for nature lovers, Glacier National Park, in northwestern Montana, for its incomparable natural beauty and almost spiritual solitude. A true natural wonder." — Chef David Pardo de Ayala, Runaway Judas

VICKY Pacheco checking out the wet market in Hong Kong early in the morning

"My favorite destinations would be France — anywhere in France, north, south, east, west, middle. I just have to go each time. Picture never fades, it revives me. There is always an interesting discovery and the pastries are, of course, original and true.

"Another favorite is Italy, not the big cities but the countryside. I always look forward to eating in Italy. It's always superb.

"Last, but not the least, is Hong Kong. I like the landscape, the quaintness, the hustle-bustle, the weather when it's not summer and the thriving restaurant scene." — Vicky Pacheco, Chateau 1771 group of restaurants

"Three destinations are not enough... there are my travel choices: 1. Any where in the United States to be with my husband Bob Lucas where we can watch a live Eagles concert. 2. Spain, where Ferran Adria experiments with new culinary magic. 3. Mesopotamia or the Holy Land, whichever does not have a conflict. I want to see where Jesus will return to in the end days. I want to be there! 4. Back to Reunion to see lobsters, dried brine-salted flying fish and "cavel" (banana trunk). It's so peaceful there and luxurious for one hour is only 89.50 $. Reunion. Heard so much about the beaches. I want to get a thin complexion unless before. The thinner mind I would ever have cooked. I'll be ready with bagoong, ripe bananas, lanzones, coconut cream plus Kikkoman-lemon-soundi. 6. Hawaii. I want to relive my experience with the Islanding and then try out the menus (up over there get to eat authentic "pasta"! in search of the locals' places. 6. Yes! Even because I'm curious about the food there. Is it worth getting hijacked for? I also want to connect with the women. 7. Alaska, to go fishing and salvado searching with my hubby Bob and my kids, Joey and Amos." — Nancy Reyes Lucman, celebrity chef and author of "Adobo Queen"

...dine indoors or outdoors, diners are rewarded to ...aster bunny cupcakes at the Marmalade Pantry

ALEX VIDUYA

...orld-class restos

THE AUTHOR with (from left) Singaporean publicist Ivy Woo, Peruvian lifestyle editor Mayra Tan and Filipino-Singaporean chef Reynaldo Arriola at Pinks

ALEX VIDUYA

The best part is, they're all moderately reasonable! to allow the cupcakes' natural flavors to emerge.

"Because of its accessibility, the Marmalade Pantry has become a popular destination place, especially during weekends," says Filipina Orhan Tuparan, summer marketing manager of Refinery Concepts, whose collection of restaurants includes Rizal, the Cow, Florida and Marmalade Pantry. "Couples and families love to come here for brunch."

Downtown also offers ideal dining and bar-hopping options for couples, but against the employees' Marina Bay waterfront skylines, the Fullerton Bay Hotel's Lantern has been cited by CNN-GGoom as one of the best hotel bars in the world today.

Popular among locals, expats and tourists, including occasional Hollywood high-flyers and celebrities, the Lantern offers delectable gourmet tapas and signature cocktails amid a stylish and semi-outdoor poolside setting. The ambiance is made more soothing by guest DJs who play jazz and Cuban beats.

The best Grill and Sky Bar, which specializes in contemporary Australian cuisine by celebrity chef Luke Mangan, is also worth checking out. Located on the 56th floor of the same building housing Ion Orchard mall, the restaurant is a casual glass house with a panoramic view of the garden city.

Its glass roof is covered by a translucent sail-like white structure shaped like leaves to temper the harsh noonday sun. In a low-lying room, Salt Grill diners are bound to experience a totally different vibe as Singapore is bathed in the glow of stars above and city lights below.

Alex V. Vergara

Escape to (or from) White Beach

Text and photos by Karla Vizcarra
Contributor

The best thing about Puerto Galera is that there is always a way to escape from the madness–or to choose to go towards it

ABOUT six years ago, I wrote a piece on Puerto Galera. I was in love with a French tourist in Tabinay, and my article was peppered with lines like "a tree as blue as Paul Newman's eyes," and dreamy voyaging and sap and woodsother.

I remember hiking to Aninuyan Village with this long and exquisite creature, and on the way up stopping to squat upon a rocky precipice, our discourse on solar panels protected many trees and then by the buzz of chainsaws.

It was April, the height of summer and branching back planetmaps of Mindoro Silog Destinations, Elsa's Mango Siesta, Sunny Orange, Spider, Investment, and enhancement, but we stone stayed on White Beach, and I noticed nothing to do with it. By then, walking up sandy and disoriented beneath somebody's house hoods had long ago lost its appeal.

I'd regularly been going to Tabinay, a quiet portion of the mainland, with family members since I was little, but it was only on my last summer of college, in the early 2000s, that I found myself disgorged upon the expanse of white sand and wooden bars and resolved to save another that is White Beach.

I was among a pack of people who had travel-themselves Kuala Lumpur, and during the day we hustled waves and were aroused chills and claimed for ourselves spots of spectacular and solitary nature to agree our discussions on important matters such as the origins of "LSD."

At night we pitched tents and dug ourselves into holes and rounded on and the Coca-Cosmo, a jungly but near the end of the beach, in exaggerated praise and awe of the night sky and all that in it. It was the last time White Beach would allow me catching on its sand, and the last time the beach would be free from police patrols and intense crowds in the summer.

Rock barrier

I would return to the island 10 or 15 more times, sometimes crossing the groups of seasons, sometimes smack in the middle of tourist free-for-alls. At times I crossed the rock barrier at the end of the beach to stay at resorts in Tamarom, where rooms are slightly more expensive but the air less thronged. Sometimes I rented one Coco Aruana's units for P200 a night, where your head hits the ceiling when you try to sit up. And sometimes I went along on trips to Sabang, a small island that resembles Makati Avenue at night, except it's surrounded by water.

Now, most people my age have moved on to more advanced levels of fleash, but I've always kept my kinship with Puerto Galera, its small and colors, Bob Marley soundtracks, and cold bottles of Pale Pilsen drunk upon sway wooden stools on bars all synonymous to summer, and the effective shortage of city tourist sublimes ever worrying about putting too much for anything.

This year, I convinced my cousins to take the bus from Sun to the Batangas port and ride the boat and a half ferry to Puerto Galera. We agreed to avoid White Beach at all costs, and opted for a quiet little resort in Talipanan near Tamarom beach.

As usual, the Batangas port was filled with people trying too hard to be helpful, but I'd grown used to them and instead of loathing out, was just allowed myself to be annoyed towards the different variations for volunteers commercial. The ferry ride was nice as always, except the part where they unfurled plastic sheets to keep passengers from getting wet. Then it got seriously smelly and children began to bob solidly around for plastic in boat. Thankfully, we arrived at our destination on time and in.

Unremarkable

Talipanan is an unremarkable area that is just starting to develop, and are more common. Apart from the occasional open by tourists' motorcycle rentals/scooter rent guides, are mostly had the beach to ourselves, his switched from bangishing on the sand with our books and silk, and venturing into the ocean to frog around and lie on our backs. We spent a glorious afternoon bobbing under the sun and marching no-hats-need and trying to keep our hats from flying off the sand. By the second day, we were on a miracle headed towards White Beach for P30 each.

The best thing about Puerto Galera is that there is always a way to escape from the madness–or to choose to go towards it. There are always peaceful coves and niches of space you can carve out for yourself, and jungles and mountains and side streets to retreat to. The island is filled with bays and smaller islands and stretches of sand and sea. And should you decide you're done with snorkeling, there is always easy of White Beach to return to, with its pitchers of Mindoro filling, packs of vendors fainting their halos at you, and the mostly-yet all-too-familiar sound of tourists, foreigners, locals, dogs, and hypnosis.

CLOCKWISE, from above: Clear blue and quiet at Talipanan; soaking in the rays; mooring at our backdrop

By the time we were done with our Mindoro filing, here on the beach were starting to crank up their techno, and excited, mostly younger groups were beginning to flock towards the noise. We took this as our cue to hail a trike back to Talipanan.

As I had already said, waking up on the sand—either from exercise drunkenness, or just to avoid having to pay for accommodation—is an early 2000s.

Now: P1,000 is no longer enough to fund a weekend, as the common breakdown—P500 for round trip transportation, P200 for accommodation, the rest for beer—no longer holds. Also, the port has sadly found ways to charge extra for things carvers properly explained, but rates remain reasonable and far from Boracay-esque.

Contact the author at chelcoordog@yahoo.com.

SUMMER REFRESHMENTS AT SHAKEY'S

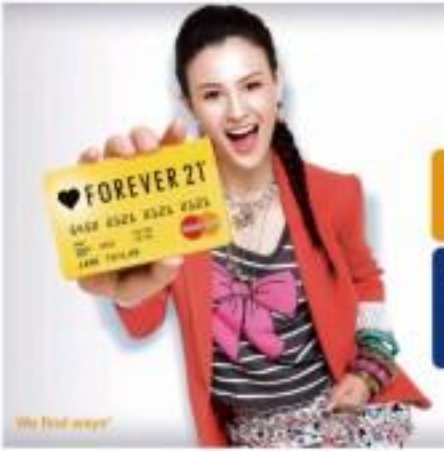
This summer, make Shakey's your sanctuary from the heat and humidity. The leading family restaurant offers all-new refreshing Super Shake concoctions, the soothing complements to an already extensive super shakes lineup.

Be overjoyed with Orange Burst, a sensational milk shake made of creamy white vanilla ice cream blended with a delightful burst of fresh orange juice and whipped cream. It's a sunny sweet treat!

For an intensedingly wonderful delight, try the Peanut Butter and Banana Shake. It's a fun mix of creamy peanut butter and yummy banana slices coolly blended with smooth vanilla ice cream and fresh milk.

At P165 per glass, the new Super Shakes will temper the humidity away. It's available at all Shakey's Pizza-rama for dine-in only.

Spend your summer at Shakey's, where great taste, variety and value bring people closer together. Make it an everyday enjoyment. For fast and efficient delivery, please call 71-777 or log on to www.shakeyspizza.ph and remember: it's late, it's FREE!



IT'S MORE FUN SUMMER SHOPPING AT SURPLUS

Have fun in your summer get-away with the perfect swim buds! Go extra with iconic printed lounge island shorts. The one-piece swimsuit bandeau also available at Surplus for only P549.75. SM Advantage, BPI Prestige and BDO Rewards Card holders can get in at special rates until April 28, 2013.

Summer is more fun with the coolest beach bound styles! Swim Surplus! Its the in store for the season, it has all the sun, sea-ter and sweetheart you will need for a perfect day at the beach like the The Lighthouse Marina Resort or just for lounging around on a hot summer day.

What makes shopping more fun at Surplus? Everything in the store is bright, bold and beautiful, with hot pieces that will make waves on the beach and beyond. Boardshorts with its sunny stripes and geometric prints, cool tees on a summer holiday with hibiscus prints and tropical island designs. Tank tops, racerback tee, bikini, tethered and bandeau tops for beach babes and muscle shirts and tees for guys complete the picture perfect look.

There's more fun with summer accessories from Surplus: beach hats, travel gear and light shawls to shield you from the heat; flipflops, sneakers and plastic shoes; and handy water bottles. SM Advantage, SM Prestige card, BDO Rewards Card holders can get insane summer baskets for only 249.75 until April 30, 2013.

The summer collection is available at Surplus stores at most SM Supermalls. Surplus is also on Facebook – simply search and visit Surplus Shop at Facebook.

Vivid and retro geometric printed board shorts.

Summer Fun. Purple tie-up/printed purple halter tie-strap with matching bikini bottom.

Raw bikini role discussion. Bra detailed and side geometric pair photographed at The Lighthouse Marina Resort.

Summer Splash. Plain colors with thin-line plaids contrast with drawstring details coordinate a yellow and bright aqua top.

super LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Subsection Editor Pam Pastor

Penshoppe adds Zac Efron to its A-list endorsers

By Erica Paredes
Contributor

WITH so many "it" girls and boys coming in and out of the scene, it takes a whole lot of talent, discipline and good people surrounding you to be more than just a flash in the pan. Growing up in different enough, or throwing in a few million pairs of eyes watching you do it sounds like a recipe for disaster.

So how did Zac Efron make it from "High School Musical" to his newest flick "The Lucky One," and the first clothing endorsement ever for Penshoppe, all in one piece?

"I think you need to focus on keeping it about the work. I try and see my family as much as possible," says Efron. "It's very easy to become jointed in Los Angeles and once you're alone in LA, I think there's when bad things happen."

Although the Penshoppe shoot took place in a $10 million bachelor pad surrounded by the lifestyle of Entourage's Hollywood Chateau, Efron seems to have his feet more firmly planted on the ground. "Bottom line is that I've always known from day 1 that nothing can ever stay from acting," says the actor, who recently raised 15-year-old Evelyn The Loraine, "and as long as I have what I have to do and good people around me, I think I'm pretty safe."

He enjoys having time a lot to unwind, with hiking as his activity of choice, but he also has an adventurous side. "I recently tried bungee jumping," says Efron. He enjoys traveling a lot, and is now in Australia starting a windsurfer promo tour for "The Lucky One."

And speaking of traveling, Efron says he can't wait to finally visit the Philippines. "I've always wanted to go to the Philippines," he says. " I've heard a lot about it from my dad, who has been there a lot, and I always get jealous of all the stories."

Fluency will be assured to know that Zac has not only tried and enjoyed adobo, but he's actually cooked it himself. "I learned how to make chicken adobo," he says proudly, "and I also like that purple stuff..."

No matter why, and he apparently also enjoys halo-halo, which he finds delicious. Book your tickets, girls, because Zac plans to swim with the whale sharks, surf, and visit Cebu while he's here. Is that a hint, Mr. Efron? "I've heard so much about the place, the food, the beaches," he says. "I can't wait to visit."

"We are very happy and proud to be the first ever endorsement deal of Zac Efron in the world. The fact that he chose a 100 percent Filipino brand is something all Filipinos can be proud of as well," says Benito Lim, Chairman of Golden ABC, the company that owns Penshoppe.

Brand Director Abet Mendiola adds, "Zac Efron defines the all-new Penshoppe. From a small humble entry into humble beginnings in Mandaue, Cebu, to being the first endorsement choice of a Hollywood A-lister, we have come a long way."

Filipino friends

According to Efron, close Filipino-family friends urged him to accept

THE LUCKY ON

SHOPWISE
Sola Swiss
Promotion
March 29 - July 18, 2012
IT'S SWISS AND IT'S FREE!
START COLLECTING NOW!
FREE!
START COLLECTING NOW!
3 Piece Dinner Set
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4pcs Coffee Spoons Set
4pcs Cake Forks Set
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1pcs Salad Serving Set
Get 1 stamp for every P750 purchase.
SUCAT • ALABANG • MAKATI • BAGUMBAYAN • ARANETA • ANTIPOLO
MANILA • COMMONWEALTH • SAN PEDRO

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. UPIN BY JESS ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY BY ROLAND LAGOS

DICK TRACY BY JOE STATON AND MIKE CLARK

LOVE MOATS BY ELIZABETH HOGWOOD

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

RIKO MACHINE BY RYAN ABRERA

SEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

MUTTS BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY

DUSTIN BY STEVE KELLEY AND JEFF PARKER

TULDOK BY MARA COLL

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21 to April 20): You'll enjoy the company of others today, especially in group situations. However, be careful that you don't appear to overcompensate for any insecurities you might have about relationships or friendships.

TAURUS (April 21 to May 21): People in authority definitely have your number today. This is a good time to ask for favors in a manner in which you might be rewarded or promote more than just self-interest.

GEMINI (May 22 to June 20): You're particularly productive today using your intellectual or perhaps humanitarian education. Group organizations might even consider something related to publishing, the media, marketing and the like. Everything!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Don't get upset because the facts do not support the conclusions you have drawn. You might be tempted to be overly generous to others. Conversely, if you're feeling bitchy and petulant, it shows!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a marvelous day to achieve and enjoy the company of others. Dealings with others are favored, and you'll be fair and upbeat. Everyone wants you around!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Be mindful of deadlines that are coming up soon. Don't bore yourself with something that is tough to work with. Be persistent instead.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Emotionally, you're powerful today. Your ability to express yourself is strong, and you're interested in many subjects. Debating, gambling, sports, creative activities with children, the theatrical and performing arts are favored. Creative group ventures are promising.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Take a moment to look around the Today Family discussions and entertaining at home. Get to know those people who deliver to your family member.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You feel optimistic and willing to go today! You believe in yourself! Your confidence is high, and you're ready to overcome anything and anybody that gets in the way!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a wonderful day for handling personal matters. Use this power! Things might look better than they are. Beware.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a magnificent day for romance. You have the ability to express your feelings with people you love today!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): None of your activities seem to square with your spiritual attitudes. Perhaps compromise for those who are important, and you also feel insecure about what you can accomplish today. It can help you to be in touch with the stillness of others.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs or www.sudoku.com

Concepts Sudoku — By Dave Green

2	6						8	
5						4		2
			8		4		6	
		6	2			3		
				7				
		3			1	9		
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Difficulty Level ★★★★

Answer to previous puzzle

1	7	2	3	4	5	6	8	9
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6	8	9	1	2	7	3	4	5
4	5	1	7	9	3	8	2	6
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9	6	3	8	5	2	1	7	4
5	1	4	2	3	6	9	5	7
7	9	6	5	1	8	4	3	8
2	3	8	9	7	4	2	6	1

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1. Cambridge one
4. Quite a lot (before a lot and after)
10. Second letter, in Nome
11. Bouquet bud
12. Chesapeake Bay city
13. Condescension (var.)
14. Letter of
15. Cucumber
16. Around Nairobi
17. Asian nation (formerly)
18. Sch.'s old assoc.
19. Hindu queen
20. Like a bone
21. Sometimes gender
22. Word of
23. Weird
24. Lost, source of the trouble
25. Ten-cent (pref.)
26. Transparent cloth
27. Sharpen, as a knife
28. Bowler, at times
29. Like the Gobi
30. Lacking
31. Old, in the Bronx history
32. Lab. tool
33. Cotton, and
34. Before
35. Dismantle
36. Nonsense!
37. Hawaiian food
38. Pluto
39. Take, as essentials
40. Hamlet's son, Fortinbras
41. Summer problem
42. Before marriage
43. Sometimes it's French
44. Sing
45. Cheese letter
46. Cheese, Italian
47. Cheese, Dutch
48. Cheese, Swiss

DOWN

1. Prize fund
2. Pancake
3. Businessmen's Assns.
4. Cheese, Spanish
5. Cheese, Greek
6. Cheese, Italian
7. Cheese, Mexican
8. Cheese, Danish
9. Cheese, Swiss
10. Cheese, Italian
11. Cheese, Italian
12. Cheese, Italian
13. Cheese, Italian
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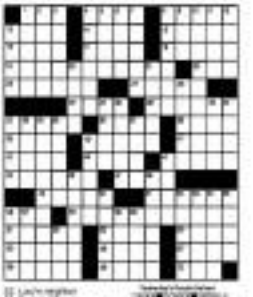
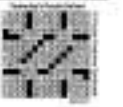


Answer to previous puzzle



'Fansons' get the night of their lives

Text and photos by Annette S. Tayao

Eight years after their first Manila concert, fiercely loyal fans turn up and sing along to every song of the Hansons

MMMBOP, Mmm-bop, Mmm-bop, WE WANT MORE!!!" sustained fans in perfect unison. It wouldn't be helpful to get excited at concerts, because, yes, 19 songs in just 1 1/2 hours just wasn't enough.

See it, like me, you've been dying to see one of your favorite bands perform live since you were nine years old.

Because I can meddle to watch their "Underrated" gig in 2004 (read: broke college student), their return to Manila last March 30 as Isaac, Taylor and Zach Hanson performed at the Grand Ampitheater Araneta for their "Shout It Out" concert.

As the first chords of "Waiting For This" filled the coliseum, Vanessa* welcomed the band with shouting, jumping and a lot of eyelid smoke. Since I was more than just a concert, it was a standard time machine, as the brothers took us all the way back to the '90s, playing hits like "Where's The Love," "Thinkin' of You" and "I Missse Michael You."

The energy in Araneta was just as electric when the band played more current hits like "Thinkin' 'Bout Somethin,'" "Crazy Beautiful," and "Can't Stop."

"I don't know what took us so long to come back!" said Taylor to a screaming crowd.

Some are the brothers' soundscapes exotic, explored by a more bluesy, soulful sound. Their beautifully arranged three-part harmonies were better showcased since the band showed things down with their acoustic set, with songs "Strong Enough to Break," "Deeper," "Wish That I Was There" and "A Song To Sing."

Cameraman's favorite

Zach, usually in the back behind his drum set, was up front for the acoustic set, sitting on his cajón. The youngest of the three—and the only one who's kept his long locks—seemed to be the cameraman's favorite face to zoom in on. Bust again, who could resist that charming, boyish smile?

Understandably, majority of the crowd were girls, each one swooning as Isaac started playing the first riffs of "Penny and Me." But the band had their fair share of male groupies (just behind me and my sister were two guys who looked like brothers—and they were singing along to almost every song!). Human error: heard a song, assumed it their guys' fave, "Lips A Lilli'n," to help them "Figure out the crazy voodoo of the ladies," said Taylor.

Of course, the boys couldn't do a show without playing the hit that first put them in pop music fame in 1997, and earned them three Grammy nominations: "MMMBop" was, of course, still fans' most loved Hanson song, judging by how loud everyone was singing/screaming the lyrics. It was a small crowd, probably not even a fourth of the seating capacity filled, observed one of the bouncers, but it was evident how fiercely loyal these fans were.

"Thank you guys for being here 15 years since the first song came out. We've decided to stay at sticking around for at least 15 more," declared Taylor, to solid cheers from the audience.

After an adrenaline-pumping "Lost Without Each Other," I found myself with "If Only" from their 2000 album "This Time Around." But, because this I 'n-here does not just see short for us, we asked for more—and they obliged, playing "In the City" as their encore.

And with that, Hanson took their bow and finally retired the stage, leaving an '90s kick with the rockin' memory of one of the best musical nights of our lives.

Hanson hangover

By Janis Yee

TAKE1: Manila by storm (literally as it was raining when we got), the '90s hit trio found Hanson made sure was that their return to the Philippines was not their first nor will one of the most talked-about.

Siamese brothers Taylor, Isaac and Zach who were behind the popular 1997 single "MMMBop" recently wrapped their concert series in Manila and Cebu as part of their "Shout It Out" world tour.

Fifteen years since the fateful launch of a certified US$ by no-city's terms, younger brother Zach relates that their latest album is their "best yet" and "most personal." Adding that "It's a record infused with pride. We've been here for a long time and we feel good about it."

Isaac quickly added that the album's creative process is also unique. "We've recorded through the album as a trio, [that's why] there's a very natural sound to it."

Time enough that they're enjoying all these years in the industry, Isaac says Jaxon, an 11-year-old son of Taylor and sevens failed to relay to the press with good humor every once in a while.

With new artists crowding the music scene, Isaac says Taylor and Zach have "a great appreciation for the music scene. It's not easy to get your music out there and be heard. We've been very fortunate to have been able to do that."

Taylor, on the other hand, is more philosophical about the band's longevity. "We've been very fortunate to have been able to do that. We've been very fortunate to have been able to do that. We've been very fortunate to have been able to do that."

HANSON: We want to be remembered as a band that made a difference, that stood the test of time, is passionate for great art and great music, and, ultimately has made that here."

—HANSON PRESS RELEASE

He shared that they are "music nerds" and they want to be remembered as a band that "serves songs that stood the test of time, is passionate for great art and great music, and, ultimately has made that here."

One such example, of course, is "MMMBop," which Taylor says is "hard to recognize, but not necessarily annoying. [It's because] You have to have multiple readings."

With worldwide fame up on their shoulders and a dedicated fan base, a question of the years (longevity) of getting old.

"We're no longer in a band. I can't imagine going solo. We still have a lot to do [outside] as a band," Taylor said.

At this point, in their careers, people wonder what they leave behind. What do you see the world as? "Corpse Dust" (today the day). "And, of course, that's 90-percent peroxide and 1-percent impurities."

Finding 'forgotten' music

I first in my bedroom mic-perfect by watching YouTube when I'd or cameras. Vincent Mann, formerly front-y chicken soup of a mid-mid review and born the standard choreographed music videos, the Frenchman took music out of its rendered numbers and took him the neighborhood public spaces where a had been born.

In the streets of depleted Paris, he filmed himself with a handheld camera as they played songs like street level busker's La Bagatelle-gan's "Take Away Shame" quickly became a model independent musicians and auditioners have since followed.

"I think some amazing music videos have been made, but it's very important to keep in mind that there's always something else possible, and there where people aren't supposed, suddenly it was the official song. Well, no, that's only one way it seems that as soon as music videos get famous, all the other expressions disappeared. Nobody tries anymore, or push. And that really pisses me off."

It's 2010, and Ron here is sending an unsigned manager forty years old, and Vincent Mann is in Paris filming for La Bagatelle-gan. The feel of an outsider brings over the old Paris apartment where he follows Ron here down old stairs. We can't here Ron here preparing, whereupon it is suggested the opening of "For Heaven" to cross in mind.

With a romantic sightseer, a band with a mismatcher he habitually starts, and large eyes with Francis builds three—as in Vincent Mann, a man named Mara Coson, who was then in photo Ron—dance at a café in Magdalena Ilawe during his short trip to the Philippines, explaining himself as I tried my time to delineate between his and in-between.

The latter role, by turns, was. So did the role of unsuspecting screenwriter when, inside a small Quezon City village, we were faced with this elderly headdress-wearing plus-one daughter. We tried to decode out the perversity of the television playing clips of Rihanna over several choppy, half-cut Filipino videos. A rare jukebox queen, asked if it was possible to turn the television off. Hector Mann had to explain why he was there on a Sunday afternoon with a camera.

One of the singers looked at me or, perhaps, at the camera. "Do you want to know who Gily Basanta was, that I did not see what Vincent Mann had been trying to address.

Alive, not archived

"He makes them, we instantly there to keep them alive. The positive not going to keep them alive like that. There's a reality once gone he beheld. Every recording is a semblance of a live performance, being able to record with these technological credits is very recent. Let's stop thinking it's a good thing to archive, let's start thinking about how we can use these recordings and push it towards something else. It could be the rise of new culture."

The Mahobay Singers have been around since 1998, with members coming and going over the years. Vincent Mann found their sounds from a record collector near Magallanes, who owns Rhythmyze. For the longest time they performed only in a recording studio, with no concerts landing therein.

"That afternoon, two of the elderly men started guitars. It was easy to see that the humble Mahobay Singers have become a foundation, an art that requires time and context, an art realm gained and increasingly "institutionalized."

Documenting "traditional" music around the world, Vincent Mann a growing down the line of post-colonial life, added. He documents his reaction against Conservationism in local music scenes, and is by no means the only one. The association of Ratings, abolished them to Beyonce or sing songs about Jesus.

Still, Vincent Mann's new undisclosed scientific label, Peuleu Nuances, old tunings have become prey to the commercials the benefit of a younger generation trained into Western influenced tastes we only discover by game.

"We have to treat people on the same level. There is this real notion of respect between cultures, and people think of respect and they create barriers and distances. When I think I really want to the middle, it's not because I arrive in a village and see you guys are having a ritual on the same day, then yeah, I want to be part of the show. I understand that people are fond more about that, but the problem that's the same thing. That's one of the most beautiful things, that you feel as home everywhere, this kind of situation."

Naturally, the idea of a Westerner breaking into cultures with standard frames from a range of preconceived notions about themselves of "the other" and how cultures is destroyed and by whom tends to come very red—or white—flags. But "better service" is a term Vincent no longer really when I searched for the source of my obsession and I found it in myself. I was meant to know the Mahobay Singers, but I didn't. He did.

Ritual

"When I call experimental ethnography, why very subjective ethnography is definitely the tools doing. I'm working on some its sort of like, really breaking down barriers in the way that two out of my friends, I'm bringing the idea from front of mind based on ancient bits of ritual. At the end of the day, we just did that ritual with the drummer in Taguig and I brought a lot of other band joining people on play music with us, so it's more than this very traditional ritual to evolve into a new kind of music. Some cultures only use this kind of jam, with the dramatic clanking. It was so beautiful, he was having a great time, he was laughing so hard. That was amazing."

While I was still wandering New York-city, I got a message from Vincent Mann filming the route we hoped to see—and sometimes, they're my own. For the last three years, he's been going around the world filming what is left of our differences, hoping from bathroom to bathroom, from computer closet and garage, traveling from Salinas in Daguan, and then exiting from here to Croatia, Ethiopia and wherever life or crowd-funding can direct him.

"I think that's why people research me, actually, because I feel I have much in common. I don't aim at all. I feel at home everywhere and I am the same everywhere. Sometimes people may find it strained."

Rose Lacera, who had become the spokesperson of the Mahobay Singers, immediately her definitely and Vincent Mann. "You come here to learn about our culture, so can I go to your house?"

"It's something I've been facing very recently a big challenge. With indie makers, everybody wanted to do it. It was very simple, and people would like to know how to be in it. When it comes to these 40- or 50-year-old [documents]...really...characters...so, sometimes there is a complexity different every. The way he has to negotiate them is by being very open and honest with them. I think the way I look at them, I look them in the eye, and I am very very open."

While "Vincent Mann" is actually a Guinevere double character from a Steppes story, the real man (Stephen) explained himself with Sundowns but surprisingly, with humility and curiosity. While he hated E.L.M. and Sun Jones, as well as Peuleu Planetes, he quickly learned about what the Mahobay Singers were about.

Till an indie band they're playing for La Bagatelle-gan, Dad's another Intel-dressed thousand views or so. Till older people who play traditional music, and they're going to ask you if you'll ever need more water. He tipped the distance as documentalists, and then packing this notation and ship it out to archives, stamped as a failed preservational transfer.

"Now, I'm one of those suggested, driven up, while Vincent Mann set up his equipment. Vincent Mann asked me to affix a microphone onto Gily Basanta's and says, He suggested we take a walk outside, and what was happening is kind of the rise with the band. Suddenly this wasn't Ron here. I had expanded into the scenes and dipped behind the scenes of a take away shoot.

When Vincent Mann shot upwards to the sky and spun around, his multi-mark camera movements reminded me of what director Jonathan Demme told Stew Music is the best narrative element you can have.

"That's it, you know, you don't need any more. The music goes, and you with a camera, you go and follow and that's what I have a film. That's the most natural thing. It's trying to reach that very very simple thing. You try to be as organic as possible, that means to be as to be invested as possible. Not to have any preconceived ideas and if you travels that, your film will be happy. That's the idea! That's what I've been working on myself."

French filmmaker Vincent Mann records the Mahobay Singers—and I am stunned that it took the eyes of a foreigner to show me what kind of music we really owned

VINCENT Mann

Musical harder

And so were the afternoon, with the usual business, the en-music banter of cheeky acronyms, and don't-be-sure-I'm-gonna-be-late-for-my-own-funeral-ness. I kept mistaking for "originality."

Holding the Zoom recorder wasn't the best reality check, but it was my metaphorical pearls. The Mahobay Singers walked up the streets, dodged cars, and sang to children on the street. We walked and recorded, capturing the sound of cars and little purebred dogs yapping under gated houses. We were capturing life here. I recalled parallels to the ethnic projects, where through Film, he took me to the streets of Brazil (it had a piano in the middle of the street). Turkey, and all over the world.

"I think walking is the most amazing thing to do. When my feet are moving, my brain is functioning. That's how you see life, just walking by yourself. See running, I'm against running."

"Let's do something slow, slow-low," one of the male singers suggests. And so begins the ballad. "My Song Today"—it was Beatlesque, and I began to really understand why the foreigner was. It dawned on me only to have held new eyes at the thing as ways band, but that it took the eyes of a foreigner like Vincent Mann to show me what kind of music we really owned.

"Actually I'm not looking for misfortune, I'm looking for deliberance. People sometimes ask me, 'So are you going to make one song like about the Philippines?' No, no I prefer to make a film about a band. I don't want to show one big thing, somehow everything and my look were me are all the same. I want to see we are all different. The world is amazing, and people make long films. The world is amazing and I could make about it."

"We don't want this tradition to die," Rose Lacera tells me with concern. I see. "It is few years we want to able to sing anymore."

I am sure Vincent Mann will forget some of us (okay) but memory card (no) and his footage, other experiences. He will be like that social chip off a boomerang from Australia that he pulled out to show me. He saw someone in video form. Some, and write this, he is back to other he was before...behind a video and nothing more.

You can still listen to the Mahobay Singers on about every Wednesday night from 8PM. He can find Vincent Mann's work on portraitphoto.net. Discuss follow me on Twitter @annetayao.

The lucky one

It encourage (0)

the environment.

"They told me it's the fastest clothing brand in the Philippines. Penshoppe is a cool brand. I learned about how they started and their history. It's an original Pinoy brand."

"My style mixes great with Penshoppe's. I'm very casual—a t-shirt-and-jeans kind of guy, and so the scene that I want to look nice." And nice and casual he did look during the interview in Penshoppe jeans, a simple canvas de chino-type shirt, and varsity jacket. He even handpicked a box of clothes from the shoot to bring home for personal use.

Khen has never had a clothing endorsement prior to this, and for someone of his level of celebrity to say yes to Penshoppe is a very big deal. He chooses his movie roles very carefully, and one can assume he does the same when choosing products he has to represent.

Khen says, "I want to make the type of movies that I want to see. I look at a character, and I look for integrity." The problem is the roles where the character's actions mirror what the artiste he could do in real life.

Unlike some young actors who come into their own and refuse to consider showbiz role models, Khen wholeheartedly feels it comes with the package. "I don't think being a role model ever goes away," he says, "and a big part of it is just being yourself." He adds that it's not always easy but keeping himself on what he wants to do helps him stay balanced.

A piece of advice from Zac to young people: "The most important thing you can do is find some creative outlet, some way to express yourself." He identified such an outlet and credited a lot of it growing up. He says it helped him through high school.

He adds, "If people bully you or make fun of you, it's probably because deep down they are jealous of what you are doing. I was about 12 when I did my first stage production in school. I knew it was fun and then I was doing something different."

Although some people may have found his choice of artiste extremely daring, he thought it was fun and creative and it leads him happy. "At that time I didn't think I would be doing it at this level, but I think that's what happens when you are doing what you love—you enjoy the fun and continue to challenge yourself."

THE PENSHOPPE team: Golden ABC chair Bernie Liu (second from right) and wife Alice (left), Hollywood publicist Jayce Ramirez, Zac Efron and brand director Jake Mendoza

"MY STYLE mixes great with Penshoppe," Zac says. The shoot took place at a $3-million bachelor pad.

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Ready for their solo

Meet the winners of Solo's Online Model Search

By Pam Pastor

THEY joined Solo's third Online Model Search and emerged triumphant.

After raking in online votes and impressing the judges as the go-see and interviews, Edward Angelo Espinola and Sophia Balagot were declared the new faces of the brand, beating around a hundred other aspirants.

The two were launched in Solo's summer 2012 campaign, wearing pieces from the brand's military-inspired collection. The clothes from the collection are now be found in Solo stores along with bikinis, cover-ups and other beach essentials.

Sherrie Rosas Gotanco, chief executive officer of Elite Garments, the company behind the brands Solo, Penwang Ensembles and Twenty-two: 96!, said the fun is just starting for Solo this year. "Starting next year our customers! We will soon be launching the third series for Solo's Pinay Camouflage Homecoming Series. This collection will feature a fancy character who everyone knows. After summer, we will launch Solo's next Online Model Search. It's always exciting to see the creativity of the entries."

But for now, get to know the current Solo Online Model Search winners.

Edward Angelo Espinola

Tell us about yourself.

I'm 24 years old and I'm still a student. I volunteer in Emilio Aguinaldo College and was taking up Marketing but I dropped for now. I plan to say for my youngest brother to continue his studies. And I'm planning to save up for my dad' studies and I'm hoping that I'd be able to study this coming semester.

What are your interests/passions?

I like playing the guitar and the piano. I'm also into basketball. I

prefer reading and doing things. Also all on the couch all day long and play video games. I'm also into electronics and clothes. I sometimes customize my clothes. I make minimal changes. I cut some parts like the neckline or the sleeves. I learned how to sew out of curiosity and started with a cross-stitch. I got my pair of jeans in a tub of bleach and water and left it there and it faded. These were fun experiments.

Why did you decide to join Solo's Online Model Search?

I just gave it a try. My entry was one of the latest pictures. I needed to wait for my relatives and I really wanted to have a print at Time I won, lucky me!

How do you feel about winning?

I couldn't believe it at first... I almost dropped my phone when the finalists were called.

What do you love about Solo?

I love the way the clothes fit. I'm a bit thrifty so my budget so I have difficulty finding sizes from other brands. The price is worth it!

Sophia Balagot

Tell us about yourself.

My full name is Sophia Aleksha Ahmad. Balagot is my middle name. I'm half Arab-half Filipina. I'm only child in the family. I turned 23 last January 12. I graduated at AIM last College Legaspi branch. I took up AHRM. I've been working at Philippine Wine Merchants for about a year now. I started modeling when I was 15.

What are your interests/passions?

I am so into music. I like singing and dancing. I play basketball and volleyball with my friends. I also sometimes try surfing. I love going to the beach and I love water-related activities. I tried scuba diving once and I want to enjoyed it! I like to cook and eat especially Italian and Japanese food.

Why did you decide to join Solo's Online Model Search?

For me it's a once in a lifetime opportunity, so I tried it. It will also help my modeling career and develop my personality and confidence. This is something I can be proud of forever.

How do you feel about winning?

I feel so overwhelmed. The feeling was incredible. It is a dream come true.

What do you love about Solo?

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SOLO'S military-inspired 2012 campaign

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

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Short chartbusting run rains on Madonna's parade

By Rito P. Asilo

MADONNA IS out to get her pop throne back from Lady Gaga—and, as "MDNA," her 12th studio recording proves, she isn't playing coy about it. In the track, "I Don't Give A," after she rakes a swipe at former husband, director Guy Ritchie ("I tried to become all that you expect of me/ Diminished myself/ You were so mad at me/ Who's got mobility?"), Madonna gets guest Nicki Minaj to hurl a crap-expletive after the declares, "There's only one queen—and that's Madonna!"

True enough, when her latest album debuted on top of the Billboard 200 last week, it looked like the Material Girl was on course to get what she wanted—"MDNA" became her eighth No. 1 album, shipping 200,000 copies on its first week!

The album's reign at the top was short-lived, however—because, this week, it regained the biggest unsound newsb album (268 percent) in chart history, with "only" 46,000 discs sold!

These "precarious" numbers aside, it's hard to deny Madonna's mastery over the dance genre that helped turn her into one of pop music's most influential icons. By fusing pulse-pounding dance numbers like "Girl Gone Wild," "Give Me All Your Lovin'" (with Minaj and M.I.A.) and the mindbendy candy-coated "Turn Up The Radio," the mega-buzz still previews to the music biz's young, record-buying demographic.

The downside: These electronica- and techno-driven dance-floor scorchers—which make up the first half of the album...seems melodically interchangeable!

The problem: Unlike "Gang Bang" standouts a pounding beats as the dance diva sings her epiphany "I discovered a middle's get worse/ You were holding my selfie/ You were driving my hearse." And, "I'm Addicted" numbing arrangement until hits the song's irresponsible reference to "MDMA," known in the party scene as the psychoactive pill, ecstasy.

The latter half of the experiment sounds less genre-to-soul performance when Madonna finally lets the retro-inspired numbers rest. The Eastern-tinged "I'm A Sinner" is a delicious ly crossover spinoff of "Ray of Light" in which she implores Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary and Saints Christopher, Sebastian and Anthony to "catch me before I sin again!"

"Masterpiece" (I down scrape subtext, in a breath of fresh air. The Golden Globe-winning theme song of "W.E."—Madonna's second directorial effort (after 2008's execrable "Filth and Wisdom")—benefits from glorious harmonies and the singer's luscious vocals.

Surprisingly, "MDNA" bonus tracks are alternately more confessional ("Best Friend," "I Fu**ed Up," wherein Madonna apologizes for her failed marriage) or idiosyncratic (the breezy "B-Day Song," "Beautiful Killer"). And, finally, LMFAO's Redfoo and Skyblu lend their hip-hop chaffle support to their thumping remix of "Turn It's All Fun Lovin."

DJ Redfoo rocks the Big Dome

Speaking of LMFAO, we hosted the Cuban-bound waifle last Wednesday to catch the wacky duo's second visit to Manila via Empty Entertainment's "Party Rock Party Rockin' 2." We laughed and danced as the loopy Redfoo tried to make up for the absence of his nephew, Skyblu—who was said to have been his, uh, "package" after his crotch party-rockin'.

Redfoo's frontperson didn't end there. As he strapped up the nine-and-a-half-hour concert with "Party Rock Anthem," "Champagne Showers" and "Sexy and I Know It," he led his Quest Crew stripped down to their thing skimpy undies as mine (literally) caused on the solid partygoers!

MADONNA. Record-breaking brats.

Fil-Ams generate excitement on 'AI'

By Nestor U. Torre

NOW THAT Jessica Sanchez is doing stuff on "American Idol," local "Kf" buffs are looking back to the idol's other Fil-Am finalists over the past decade. Most editions of the competition have featured a Pinoy here, due in part to our innate musicality and love for vocal performances, and to Fil-Ams' "cross-generating" involvement in the talent.

Season 1's Fil-Am finalist was Brad Pascua, born in San Francisco, California. Jocelyn Seguido, the first singer from Hawaii to make it as an "AI" finalist, competed in Season 2. After "Idol," he performed for former President Bush at a prestigious banquet in Hawaii, with Kenny Loggins at the CD release party, and for the LA Lakers' games.

Finals

Jasmine Trias made it to the finals in Season 3, along with Camille Velasco, and did so well that she ended up in third place. After "Idol," her fanbase grew in the Philippines and other Asian countries.

In the Philippines, Jasmine did some commercials and performed on TV. Before "Idol," she won the Grammy Bags to Freedom scholarship, BS in Hawaii, and the Road to Home youth talent competition.

For her part, Camille Velasco released a single with Universal Records and is reported to be completing an album. She has also performed extensively in concerts and on TV.

Season 4's Fil-Am finalist was Melinda Lira, from Stanford, California. She began singing when she was only 5 years old, at her local church.

Kristi "Tessy" Pelaida was Season 5's best Fil-Am bet. Before joining "AI," he was a member of the 6th Boy singing group.

Season 6's A.J. Toledo had to settle for 18th place on "Idol." However, he hasn't given up music and is reported to be working on an album.

Season 7's Fil-Am finalist, Hannah Middleby, started singing for various functions in Florida, as well as opening for Filipino singers like Rob Lobosta and Martin Nievera during their US tours. In Season 8 and 9, Jessica Sanchez and Melissa Bromgo couldn't make it through Hollywood Week.

For her part, Elle Mogla was our Fil-Am bet on Season 10...as was Clint Jay Gamboa, who made it to the Top 24. Prior to "Idol," Elle made

SANCHEZ. One of Season 11's top favorites.

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Where to Stop Where to Go

A weekly directory of the country's best entertainments

CARA partners with Hyatt in Yum Cha fundraising event

CARA Welfare Philippines, in partnership with the Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila, invites all cruise and feline lovers to celebrate compassion and appreciation for animals with an endless dim sum feast on April 24, 12 noon until 3 p.m. at the hotel's award-winning Chinese restaurant, Li Li.

The "Yum Cha with CARA" event aims to raise awareness and raise vital funds that will help improve the lives of homeless cruise animals in the Philippines. Dine with CARA and give the "Gift of Hope" for only P1,111 per pax person, inclusive of a dim sum lunch, a dessert buffet and free-flowing iced tea and juice stations.

The fundraising luncheon will feature an inspirational talk from CARA president Nancy Co Tiojanco, who will share CARA's mission and promising future plans. The event will also hold a silent auction set various merchandise and items that will benefit CARA's cause.

CARA Welfare Philippines natures to save lives and spread the spirit of kindness to animals.

"Proceeds from the special luncheon and silent auction will support CARA's rescued animals, assist in the ongoing cost of the organization's open-shelter projects, and mobilize the educational exercise fun in local schools and barangays," Tiojanco said.

"Yum Cha with CARA" at Li Li at the Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila will be hosted by animal lover and award-winning television and radio host, Shaydeth Reyes.

For guests who will not be able to be part of the fundraising event but would like to make a positive change in the progress of animal welfare in the country, they may choose to donate or participate in the "sponsor a pet" program of CARA. To learn more, visit cara-phil.org.

For inquiries and ticket reservation, please contact the Concierge of the Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila at 245-1234 extn. 7801 and 7806. Alternatively, e-mail: sonia.bui@hyatt.com.

Tickets and/or tabs be purchased at the CARA website, caraphil.org.

Hotel H2o marks 2nd year with '2+1' free-night promo

HOTEL H2o, the only aquarium-themed urban resort hotel in the country, celebrates its second anniversary this April with a spectacular promo, "Two Plus One," offering guests a free night for every two nights' stay. "This is our modest way of saying thank you to all our guests and patrons who have made Hotel H2o one of the most popular hotels in the metro in just two years," said general manager Lily S. Jabol. With its one-of-a-kind rooms and suites, which feature either an aquarium wall or a stunning "on the water" views of Manila Bay or the Manila Ocean Park, Hotel H2o has created a destination in itself—one that has the most distinctively designed hotel in the country. The promo runs from Jan 18 to 28. For inquiries and reservations, call 256-8100. Hotel H2o is located at the Manila Ocean Park complex behind the Quirino Grandstand in Harrison Road Park, Manila.

SUMMER MENU

ASCOTT Makati's Café on the 68 presents its summer selection featuring an extensive choice of local beers including a bitter cocoa symphony of arugula and fresh tomatoes in the Award-Winning Pizza; an interesting interchimal of Butter-Grilled Salted Egg Salad (the quintessential Filipino pasta dish Spaghetti Aglio Olio); and Barbecue Baboy sandwiches a load of aggressive fried rice; and the top choice for foodies—the Beef and Beef featuring a luncheon beef with spa mash and king prawn combo. Call or the delicious indoor dining Makati Shuttle 4, Ayala Center, Makati City. For enquiries and reservations, dial 729-8888 ans. 8108.

Happy summer days at Lancaster

SPREE! "Happy Summer Days" is one of Lancaster Hotel Manila's "14" hotel rooms between March 1 to May 31 at the cost rate of P72,150 per night. The package includes buffet breakfast for two, 10 percent off on non-alcoholic beverages, 10 percent off on all services of Life Boat Blazing Rates, complimentary Internet connection, complimentary shuttle service to Ayala malls and free use of swimming pool. Lancaster is conveniently located at Shaw Blvd. in Mandaluyong City. The "Hotels Summer Days" package rate is inclusive of service charge and applicable government taxes. Prior reservation is required and subject to space availability. For more information, call 633-1818, fax 532-4888, log on to www.lancaster-hotels.com.ph, or e-mail reservations@lancasterhotels.com.ph.

Sizzling summer treats at City Garden

BOOK your stay in all weekends of April and avail of 30 percent off on room rates and 20 percent off on spa massage services. With family rates at P1,400 per person or a flat-charging rate, friends and relatives can enjoy this summer's sizzling offerings. Chill with your friends at the poolside swimming pool. Bonsai under the sun's rays and surprised yourself to a delightful time. City Garden Hotel Makati is conveniently located along Makati Avenue corner Kalayaan. For reservations, call 830-1111, e-mail makati@cgmail.citygardenhotels.com, or visit www.citygardenhotels.com.

Jolly's Probiotic Ice Cream debuts at Sugarloaf

SUGARLOAF strengthens its healthy-snacks range of products by launching ice cream treats representing its mission of serving healthy and yummy treats to every one of all ages. Jolly's Probiotic Ice Cream is the concoction of Sugarloaf's marketing and business development head Angelo M. Sorgon who was dubious or dessert preparation. "I've always dreamed of having an ice cream parlor where I could tell the world that Sugarloaf is not only for the health conscious, but yet still be able to give a lot of health benefits to its consumers. "What the ice cream and coconut milk base provides creaminess without dairy products and cholesterol, low in fat and sugar, and contain billions of probiotics from the incorporation of Seedy Good Kefir for summer. All features four flavors of vegan (non-dairy) probiotic pops: Mango-pandanoli all, Strawberry-Acai, Cream Cheese-Ube, Banana-Choco—delightfully icy and creamy with the addition of coconut milk and coconut water from Sugarloaf in Makati is located at the NBE Mart Lifestyle Center, 11 Pilaar de Roxas corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Urdaneta Village Makati City (Tel. no. 81 2-7203). The Greenhills branches at 2/F Health Zone Building, 226 Ortigas Street, West Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila (Tel. no. 661-4828 or mobile 0917-851-4252). Like on Facebook Sugarloaf Foods: Pat Sorgon and follow on Twitter @sugarloafph.

Celebrating Earth Hour at Crimson

CRIMSON Resort and Spa Mactan recently hosted intimate gathering of friends and business partners to help raise funds for the Mangrove Conservation project of Ocean Park Advocates. Jess Jardeleza, Ocean Park president Antonio Alcaraz, joined by his family, joyous and spirited, to the generous guests and are proudly received from Crimson general manager James Mitchell and his hardworking personnel. Event highlights included the Pledge Tree where guests hang their written pledges on how to save Mother Earth, donations for the Mangrove project, the simultaneous ceremonial lights-off and releasing of lying lanterns, and the islanders' by two of Crimson's intimate Villa Package. Crimson Resort and Spa Mactan is managed and operated with distinction by Pan Archipelago Hospitality Inc. (PAH).

Oxford Suites undergoes refurbishment

OXFORD Suites Hotel Makati is undergoing refurbishment during the next nine months to exploit new opportunities in the Philippines tourism industry and to reinvigorate the brand following its launch late 2007. Commencing a six-month renovation and improvement program, Oxford Suites Hotel Makati was accredited as a Best Western hotel as of Dec. 1, 2011. The 36-story, 164-room Best Western Oxford Suites Makati is situated in the heart of the Makati business and entertainment district, inspired by the boutique lodging trend, Oxford Suites Makati's guestrooms are inviting, comfortably furnished. The plan is to revamp the rooms in a chic and cosmopolitan style using neutral tones punctuated with bright accessories and flexible use of light-colored English wood. "It's a wonderful addition to our exciting hotel portfolio in Manila, in which we have a choice of locations reflecting the city's distinct business and tourist districts," said Best Western International's vice president for International Operations – Asia and the Middle East, Glenn de Souza. Best Western Oxford Suites Makati is managed by WPCI, who is the authorized Asia Development Office for the Philippines.

Microtel hotels win international awards

MICROTEL Baguio won the "International Hotel of the Year" award and Microtel Boracay was awarded the "Most Improved Hotel" in the recently concluded Wyndham Hotel Group Global Conference held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The property was likewise recognized for its excellent product and service quality, strict adherence to Microtel brand standards, active participation in chain wide trainings and activities, and effective customer service. The conference was a gathering of about 1,500 owners, managers, key officers and business partners of Wyndham Hotel Group's brands that includes Microtel, Ramada, Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, Wingate, Travelodge, Days Inn, Howard Johnson, Super 8 and others. Microtel is an international chain of hotels under Wyndham Hotel Group. Other Microtel hotels are located in Baguio, Batangas, Boracay, Cabanatuan, Cavite, Davao, Mall of Asia, Puerto Princesa and Tarlac. For reservations and inquiries, please call 888-7171 or (02) 571-888-888, e-mail reservations@microtel.ph, or log on to www.microtel.ph/locations.com.

Sense of Place offers locally grown botanical products

CEB, THE SPA at Shangri-La's Mactan Resort and Spa, Cebu offers Sense of Place treatment that features locally grown botanical products with therapeutic properties.

Packages include the Kalipay Ampalaya, which combines a volcanic ash and crushed coconut shell body scrub with a herbal wrap, and a hair and scalp treatment made with local avocado and cucumbers.

The Sampay Sense of Place treatment makes use of two therapists working simultaneously on opposite ends of the body with echo-like moisturizing facial and Noni Revitalogy massage, ensuring a deep sense of blissful relaxation.

The Palms Elite Sense of Place treatment begins with a ritual to cleanse the spirit and the magical healing of a Philippine rainforest. The four-handed massage combines the distinctive healing abilities of two therapists with soothing strokes delivered in perfect unison.

For the Hot Stone Oi Maseki Herbal Sense of Place treatment, a balm made of seasoning (Philippine camphor), native lemongrass, lapnab (five leaf chaste tree) and roots (pahbuh tree bark) is applied during a deep pressure massage. Large heated tamanu leaves are then wrapped around each limb to warm gently the herbal concoctions.

Guests seeking to revitalize their senses will find sanctuary at Shangri-La's Mactan Resort and Spa, Cebu's Chi Spa.

For inquiries and reservations, please contact Shangri-La's Mactan Resort and Spa, Cebu at (32) 231-0288 or e-mail asscb@shangri-la.com.

HARRIOTT MANILA BAGS MAJOR AWARDS

HARRIOTT Manila director of revenue manager Catherine Oca was the revenue leadership management award for two consecutive years. She credits the Sales and Marketing department's teamwork for receiving this award. "Our team also brought home the prestigious sales and marketing special achievement award of this year, which was based on the hotel's unprecedented growth rate despite the challenge in location and destination, unique sales staff deployment, effective tapping of e-commerce channels and social media while remaining corporate accounts. The two-year old property is also the most sought-after hotel for the past 15 straight months. With the Harriott Manila Sales and Marketing team is director Cristy Carreon.

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Toy Story Play Center

Gael Garcia Bernal

on Diego Luna, 'Zorro' remake

"YOU SAW him? Did you ask him?," Gael García Bernal excitedly asked when he learned of our interview with Martin Scorsese.

One of the master filmmaker's projects is "Silence," in which Gael will reportedly play one of two Jesuit priests who suffer silence and persecution in 17th century Japan. "I would really love to do that movie. It would be an honor (to work with Scorsese)!"

In the meantime, Gael is in a comedy with Will Ferrell, "Casa De Mi Padre," which is described as a funny take on westerns and telenovelas. The international actor won all praises for the comedian, who speaks Spanish in the movie: "Will is the most generous and nicest guy down to...he's a team player."

"I'm going to mention, of course, that I had my sidekick with me," Gael said, referring to Diego Luna, his best friend all the way from their child-actor days and his costar in such films as the acclaimed "Y Tu Mamá También" and "Rudo y Cursi."

The Guadalajara native, who has two kids (a son, 3, and a daughter, 11 with partner Argos, fellow actress, Dolores Fonzi), said that he splits his time between Mexico City and Buenos Aires. Excerpts from our talk:

How have you stayed friends with Diego over through you've probably been vying for the same roles through the years?

The fights (that Diego and I were supposed to have, we had them already when we were kids and growing up.

You didn't fight for roles?

No, we fought over lollipops and things like that—we've run out of things to fight about. The good thing is that, our friendship is so fun and so respect and personality. We're very happy with each other's successes.

Real friends are genuinely happy for each other when things go well. When things go bad, that's when true friends appear. A person who appreciates and loves you, and asks for nothing in return is a precious friend. I feel (Luna) is a precious friend.

He's more than that, like my brother.

Did you ever fight for girls?

Profoundly, (even) We're completely different people, so girls either like Diego or me.

BERNAL: Teams up with Will Ferrell in "Casa De Mi Padre."

Normal life

You are quite popular in many countries, including the US. Do you lead a normal life and how do you deal with the paparazzi?

I didn't want to buy into the image of a person who's famous. Not attempt to live a normal life, but it's very abnormal (laughing). For me, it happened when I was young. I was like, "I'm not going to stop doing the things I like just because people are watching me."

But, the thing is, I'm a very boring person for the paparazzi. I go buy diapers. How many pictures can you take of that? But, that's my public life. I don't think about it too much.

What can you tell us about your "Zorro: Reboot" movie? Will it be science fiction and/or action?

Yeah, kind of. Let's see how it goes. I'm curious to see what it ends up being. It obviously needs a personal interpretation from a director to give it life. For now on paper, it sounds fun and (we'll) like "Casa De Mi Padre."

Speaking of "Casa De Mi Padre," (did you plan have it recaded by equally funny to both audiences American and Latin American audiences?

The idea that came across when I first heard about the movie was that it was going to be Will Ferrell talking in Spanish. That's already funny for both English- and Spanish-speaking audiences. You're already having a premise that isn't commonly seen. The film is quite crazy in a way. It was funny for Diego and me, because we were talking in Spanish, and the director sometimes didn't know what we were talking about.

How did Will learn speaking Spanish in the film?

Will might say that he doesn't speak Spanish—but, he understands. He's very smart in that sense. He speaks Spanish OK, he can get along. But, I'll say I was thrown off, not by the comedy aspects of it, but by the quality of the actors and actresses.

Are you planning to direct again soon?

Yes, I hope so. Sometimes, I get anxious about directing, because it takes a long time, and it's a big process that normally lasts two years. Sometimes, I want to do more as an actor. But, I want to direct something soon. I just have to find the time.

E-mail renegade_1180@yahoo.com. Follow him at twitter.com/requisitedays.

Dramatic excesses in concluding series

By Rhoda U. Torre

HOW CAN you tell when a telenovela is on its last few episodes? Its resident villains either start turning remorseful—or become even more murderous than ever, making the Devil himself in their phenomenopotic enmity and evil.

More often than not, there's a huge fire, or a series of conflagrations, plus an explosion that gives the finale the requisite extra visual oomph! And always, always, there's a confrontation with an army of goons—and don't forget the kidnapping that leads to a rescue, culminating in a long, visually exciting car chase that finally stops (the series' principal villain dead in his tracks—unless he repents.

By these standards, it was clear last Monday that "Ikaw" was on its final week of telecast. Not enough, Abel Rivera was held hostage in an abandoned warehouse on Isla de Mi-Ri, as he had to be rescued—so, not by lawyers, but by a bunch of kids and robots.

Resolution

After all, robotics and the link between humans and nonhumans were the just concluded series' main thematic "hooks," as they had to figure in virtually every dramatic move and resolution. It's just too bad that some of the show's concluding twists and turns were unfailingly predictable.

To its credit, however, the series did introduce young viewers to the imaginative prospects of an impending rapprochement between humans and "feeling" robots, and that introduced the show's best role.

On the other hand, robotic nurse-child nuns like Bugoy Cinco were effective and affecting. There were too many kids on the show, whose loud and attention-calling gimmicks and antics ended up as a cacophonous mess.

For its part, "Until na Nag-ibig" is by no means an "emotional-ing" mode, but it also deserves to be cited, because its storyline has been taken in new and some of its own, and these characters have been put into play. Pinky Amador is in the Vatican, making peace with God, Christopher de Leon and Cristine Reyes are also momentarily cooling it, as the field is wide open for a major subplot featuring Jessica Soho, Alonzo Reyes, Rafael Rosell and Denise Laurel to finally kick in.

CARMINA: Effective and affecting.

What do they have to do with Pinky, Cristina, et al? Rafael and Cristine were childhood BFFs, so when he suddenly up and married Laurel, she was more than miffed.

What about Jericho and Marissa? As other happens in universes, there's a missing dog that links their lives together, but why and how are still mystifyingly murky at this point. It's complicate matters, their relationship started off bad. Is, because his company had brought her friend's business to its knees. As of last Monday, however, the former adversaries had literally kissed and made up—and kissed some more—but, her dad raised their hew, so expect more romance upheavals in the days to come.

Of course, the big, tantalizing question is, how will the Jericho-Marissa subplot finally downfall into the original Christopher-Pinky-Cristine equation? And, why all the downtalking? Could the missing ring be the key? And, whatever happened to the boy who saw Christopher (accidentally) kill a rival for the big court of land he desperately needed to make his financial and political fortunes, way back when?

Abangan!

Fil-Ams generate . . .

From page 6 |

it to the semifinals of "America's Got Talent," and was one of the singers tapped to record the collaboration YouTube video of "We Are the World for Haiti."

Unsurprisingly, and perhaps even prophetically, another singer on that benefit video edition was this year's Fil-Am bet, Jessica Sanchez. The 16-year-old San Diego native is widely recognized as "Phenom of the Week" on "ABC World News with Diane Sawyer" on March 19, 2012.

As for Jessica, her mother is Filipina and her father is Mexican-American. She competed in the first season of "America's Got Talent" when she was only 11. Sanchez was one chosen to be in the semi-finals, but she dropping the Wildcard round, finally becoming the youngest finalist in competition in the show's history.

Now, at 16, she's clearly one of the judges' top favorites—and the one is creating history!

SATURDAY Special

NOW SHOWING

New lease on acting career for Taylor Kitsch

By Rito P. Asilo

WE DIDN'T have high hopes for Taylor Kitsch's latest sci-fi movie, "Battleship"—after all, what kind of story can one expect from a film inspired by a toy franchise, like "Transformers" and "G.I. Joe"?

The moviegoer's smudge side and toy-line origin weren't the film's only drawbacks for us. Kitsch was stricken off our to-root-for list after we saw him clumsily (and irresponsibly) filling in for David Letterman's show to promote the box-office debacle, "John Carter"; almost his unfortunate appearance with a Filipina Carmen officer—who allegedly snarled an iPhone from him—during the South-east Asian shoot of Oliver Stone's "Savages."

As it turned out, the actor did visit Asia—but, the ghost was in Indonesia, not the Philippines!

This week, Kitsch is getting a new lease on his acting life by way of Peter Berg's alien-invasion saga, "Battleship"—an engaging and entertaining hybrid of "Independence Day" and "Transformers" that sets the pace for this year's summer blockbuster season.

The movie isn't just about a Navy dudes; Alex Hopper (Kitsch), who can't find the courage to ask for the hand of his best daughter in marriage, it's also about a reluctant hero who wages war against superior extraterrestrial invaders known as "The Regents."

We expected a catastrophe—but, the movie isn't bad. True, there's not much pleasure to be had in the script's lousy dialogue; vocals would have sounded rigid and emphasis if the roles weren't appropriately cast.

Kitsch, Liam Neeson, Alexander Skarsgard, Brooklyn Decker and Rihanna (in her acting debut) take to their two-dimensional characters like ducks to water; but, if you're looking for depth, you're likely to find it only in the Pacific Ocean, which acts as the action-romp's vast background.

Despite its missteps, the movie has an ace up its sleeve: Berg is no slouch in storytelling (as he demonstrated in 2006's "Hancock")—even if the script he's working on has humongous holes. Moreover, as he proved in 2007's Middle East-set war drama, "The Kingdom," the actor-director knows how to heighten the thrills in action-packed sequences, by wisely utilizing CG-heavy special effects in bridal excitement, not distractions.

KITSCH AND RIHANNA. But planet's survivors in their hands is Berg's "Battleship."

'Titanic in 3D'

We also made it a point to attend the special screening of Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet's "Titanic" to see how James Cameron has recently used his admirably Best Picture Oscar-winning romantic blockbuster into 3D. Verdict: Good and bad.

The film that catapulted Di Caprio to superstardom was first released in 1997—and it looks smashing in its new three-dimensional format, proving that Cameron is the genre's pre-eminent camera lovers, Messrs. Spielberg and Scorsese.) He doesn't use the 3D technology merely as a gimmick, and the external images he conjures up don't distract viewers from the story.

The movie tackles interweaving themes—class wars, forbidden love, the downside of technology, nostalgia, etc.—each one ranged with clockwork precision.

Unfortunately, 15 years after it was first screened, the melodrum of "Titanic's" script is so jarring as ever: It's so-love-at-first-kaligayahgoy-of-mush that, while thrilling, sometimes don't login—as exemplified by that old couple spooning as they await their imminent doom, with the angelic humming of "My Heart Will Go On" in the background. ...Oh, please.

FANS' DAY

Angelo Castro Jr. should be emulated

By Andy Bais

EDSA VILLAGERS, producers/directors: "I know veteran broadcaster, Angelo Castro Jr., as Sarong (From "Bubble & Company,") a TV show that aired in the late '70s). I told myself that I would take up journalism and, like him, report the news in a professional, straightforward manner.

"I'm a Mass Com graduate, and 'The World Tonight' was a nightly staple. Anchored by Castro and Tina Monzon-Palma, the nightly news program was the only one I respected. His delivery was classy, and he kept his opinions to himself.

"Working in the news department is as toxic as can be, but I envy the people who worked with him...his discipline and dedication should be emulated by today's anchors. It is a responsibility and a craft that should be respected."

Other views:

Maricris Catalan, office employee: "Sharon Cuneta was reported to have resorted to her fans, admitting to being 'sad,' and saying that she would like to go back to her old figure. This is good news for the Megastar's admirers, like me."

Comeback

"Those like fans in these parts aren't fond of stars who are on the heavy side, unless they are comedians. It's been quite a while since Sharon appeared in a drama. I hope she'll make a comeback this year—with a slimmer figure."

Ann Bagaoisan, student: "The surprise announcement involving the controversial talent manager and the ex-movie queen is like life imitating art—or maybe they've just been watching too many telenovelas.

"The rarified exchanges between them happened during a Mass for the former movie queen's deported husband. As reported, the media played up the incident to the hilt, as if it were of national importance! What a way to end the season of Lent."

Jay Reuben, graphic artist: "After Aga Muhlach announced his plan to run for a congressional seat next year, look who's also joining the fray—Willie Revillame. Although Revillame qualified that he won't be running, but that he'll run his 1 Will Love Foundation into a party-list group.

"I don't see the logic of him not running, considering that he is among those who could win, based on surveys. There are already a number of actors who are now politicos, especially in the Senate. Does Kris have any acting career offing suppose for the Philippine movie industry?"

E-mail: fansmail@yahoo.com

Zingers and stingers for movie titles

By Nestor U. Torre

WEEK 5/E participate in movie fora in schools or for socio-civic clubs and other organizations (call 564-6570), we "entertain" all sorts of questions from members of the audience. It's a good way for us to get a feel of what interests and concerns viewers today, the better for us to share the updated feedback with radio-TV/film people later on.

While we do get thoughtful and even provocative queries, we're struck by the number of "gossip-related" questions we get from viewers. In so-and-so really gay? Is Sharon really the Queen of Placido? (No, but our Tita Magpala friendly to—but husband's factory makes plastic products.) What's sleeping with whom? (Why, everybody, including our Tita Pinpin and Tita Chapstick.) Did Boots Anson-Roa really have her babies via Immaculate Conception? (Oh, no! Herang has had anything to say on that subject.)

—Pano nga ba really spaced-out summertours, huh?—Huwag is on all that glitz, we're not on that level!

But, the craziest aspect we get last month was framed this kinky-wisky way: "My friends and I love playing charades, but we've run out of really-lin-out movie titles to use the competition with. Can you help?"

—Well, we sure can! We don't really include it in our curriculum vitae, but one of the unofficial "titles" we hold is our once having been "crowned" the Chanelon King of Cagayan de Oro City. The Chanelon Queen was our funny Tita Carmen Paredes Shalom, who once knocked a hapless bagger too cold with her flashlight—but, that's another story.

Supply

Anyway, yes, dear questioners, we do have some really "for-us" (as in why-us) in order to spare you movie titles such as Episodes your depleted supply of stomach singers. Ready or not, here we go:

Where are your Chanelon King, one of the most disembodying sessions in our several was "Oh Dad, Poor Dad, He's Kept Me In The Closet and I'm Feeling So Sad." —Got that?

Another guaranteed opposition-stopper was "Rape of the Sabine Women"—especially when the members of the other team find it graphically set it out. Then, there's the trusty "Dr. Strangelove," or, "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb."

Strong, feisty women on Sharon's new talk show

CUNETA. Hosts "Sharon, Kuneneng Mo, Kapatid" on TV5.

By Rory Umerez

WE WERE excited to the first taping day of Sharon Cuneta's talk show on TV5, tell Ibid. "Sharon, Kuneneng Mo, Kapatid," or the channel's new media, relaxes Dolce Theater used to be. For starters, the Megastar gave her buskers and buddies a piece of her mind and promised to ignore them from now on. Until no, she isn't closing her Twitter account.)

The talk show's pilot episode is episode-designed and features strong women from all walks of life. Sharon paid tribute to two widows: Nancy Cobo and Aiwey Espiritu, who singlehandedly raised their children against all odds.

Special children

Another guest, Faye Martin, is a single mom who chose to be with her autistic son when her husband left for greener pastures abroad. Sharon has since put up a school for special children.

Sharon also interviewed TV hosts, Lolit Solis and Cindy Kurata, who recalled their ups and downs as they struggled to create a bright future for their children. "Sharon, Kuneneng Mo, Kapatid" airs Mondays to Fridays on TV5.

Sinebata video and photo derby opens

JENNIFER CHIA MENDOZA

CHILD ADVOCATES Jay Ahanda, Shiker Gumangan-Javonik and David Cobin, jointly announce the contest, while singing of Sinebata. Kinabuhayang Hiyas Media Festival. It follows up on the successful Visayas edition that was staged last year by ANC/TV and Pina Philippines and other partners, which drew a bumper harvest of over 300 video entries and 190 photographs.

The contest is open to anyone Filipino youths aged 9 to 22 who are diplomats, handy phones, regular camera and other nonprofessional equipment. Entries must be received by April 30 at any of the following reception centers: Sinebata, AnakTV 108 Building st., Pinyahan, Quezon City; Sinebata, Pino International, 2/F Unit-tagbak bldg., Tomas cano Aurrada, Tacloban City; Sinebata, Baguio Information, Sinebata, office of the VP for research, West Visayas State University Iloilo City; Sinebata, office of editorial affairs, Ateneo Bolavertry, Legaspi City; or Sinebata, PIC CC 4/F Bonifacio bldg., Dayfld Complex, Morales ave., Davig City.

Categories

Filipino youth may enter as many video materials per category as producer/director in four categories—comedy, short video clips (running from 30 seconds to 10 minutes); public service announcements to social messages (from 30 seconds to two minutes each); creatively packaged music videos (up to seven minutes each); using originally composed or commercially available music and nonfiction/documentary (from 10 minutes to an hour).

There are no restrictions in terms of themes, but the contest is seeking works that define the Filipino youth's view of issues that affect him, his family, his school and his community in general. They can be about his hopes and wishes for the future, family concerns, education, environment, substance abuse, teenage life and problems, street gangs and antisocial behavior, community issues.

Every CD/DVD entry should be accompanied by a page containing the producer's/director's name, complete mailing address, and contact information (mobile, land phone, fax and e-mail addresses), birth date and school, organizational or town affiliation.

The participant is also expected to write a short description of his/her entry and listed production credits. If he/she completed the material with other youth, their names

SINEBATA PH

MOVIE TIME

GLORIETTA 4

1: TITANIC (3D)
2: TITANIC (3D)
3: BATTLESHIP (3D)
4: THE MACHINE GUN PREACHER
5: THE HUNGER GAMES
6: BATTLESHIP
7: MORON 5 & THE CRYING LADY

GREENBELT 1

1: MORON 5 & THE CRYING LADY
2: BATTLESHIP

GREENBELT 2

1: BATTLESHIP
2: BATTLESHIP (3D)
3: WRATH OF THE TITANS
4: TITANIC (3D)
5: WRATH OF THE TITANS

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1: BATTLESHIP
2: BATTLESHIP (3D)
3: TITANIC (3D)
4: MORON 5 & THE CRYING LADY
5: WRATH OF THE TITANS

ALABANG CENTER CINEMAS

1: BATTLESHIP (3D)
2: WRATH OF THE TITANS
3: TITANIC (3D)
4: MORON 5 & THE CRYING LADY

MARQUEE

1: WRATH OF THE TITANS
2: TITANIC (3D)
3: BATTLESHIP
4: MORON 5 & THE CRYING LADY

MARKET! MARKET!

1: BATTLESHIP (3D)
2: WRATH OF THE TITANS
3: THE MACHINE GUN PREACHER
4: TITANIC (3D)
5: BATTLESHIP
6: MORON 5 & THE CRYING LADY
7: RESERVED

TRINOMA

1: MORON 5 & THE CRYING LADY
2: THE HUNGER GAMES
3: TITANIC (3D)
4: BATTLESHIP (3D)
5: THE MACHINE GUN PREACHER
6: WRATH OF THE TITANS
7: BATTLESHIP

ABREEZA

1: TITANIC (3D)
2: BATTLESHIP (3D)
3: MORON 5 & THE CRYING LADY
4: WRATH OF THE TITANS

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First-time filmmaker completes high-school dream project

By Rica Arevalo

AT 22, Gino Ioanca looks more like a screen heartthrob than a film director. But, don't let his good looks fool you—Gino is really a film school member who trained at the New York Film Academy, attended workshops at the Marilyn Dias Always Film Institute, and recently graduated at the De La Salle College of...

its flexible with a Digital Filmmaking degree.

In the upcoming Cinemabuyo Philippine Independent Film Festival, he makes his professional directorial debut with "The Animals," the shorts. "I conceptualized this when I was in high school. Back then, I was into copywriting poems. When I took film class's aesthetics, I realized I could use that experience for a film."

The movie tackles a young man's take on alcohol and drugs, and stars Albie Casiño, Dante Balagot and newcomer Patrick Ilagan.

Passionate

Iannes holds Casiño in high regard. He explains, "Albie is multitalented, his acting is different: he was confident, cool, passionate, outgoing, and game to guess—he really fought for the role!"

As a rookie director, what advice did he have to get used to? He replies, "Decide calling me 'direk' make me uneasy. I came from a film school where I was trained to do everything—cinematographer, production assistant, script and continuity guy etc.) Now, I have people doing those shores for me. It's a continuous learning process....and I'm happy to keep learning."

"The Animals" premieres in July at the Cinemalaya festival.

SAINTOS. Continuous learning process.

Zingers. . .

From page F1

Also guaranteed to confuse, confound and obviously defeat our local movie titles, some of which are real! Ideas. Are you ready for these elegant and elegant?

"Omar Cassidy and the Insidarez Kid." "The Man From A.N.E.L.A." "Machine Gun Johnny and the Sexy Queen." "El Pinoy Tom Jones." "Pandayan na Lolo Amin Wilson." "Fore, Tatay, Nene!" "Bruli Ka Ang Akong Asawa." "Mommy, Mong Angkinan Ang Aming Bol!" "Sing, Inay Ay Ako." "Sinagawa sho ng Aking Ama." "Kaibiko Ito'ng de Amerika." "Titoy Hari." "The Pig Boss." "Sa Anyong Ang Kimp—Sa Gumdrone Ang Anyap." "Hilak ng Bibig, Kaling ng Dibdib." "Mo'y Tae, May Sugat si Lamia." "Wang Bukit May Tirik Ang Mga Bone."

And, the runaway champion of them all? "Agent: Idiocot si Ang Pilving Bi'anderal"!

'Game Change' premieres . . .

From page F6

both scientific and personal accounts of the tragedy. The show's stories are told through actors and reconstructions of eyewitness accounts that make the tragic events chronologically come to life once more.

Movies on TV

On HBO today at 8 p.m., "Game Change." April 15 at 10:40 a.m., "Salt." April 16 at 9:45 a.m., "The Lovely Bones." April 17 at 1:30 p.m. "Good Will Hunting." April 18 at 5:20 p.m., "St. Elmo's Fire." April 19 at 5:50 p.m., "Apollo 13." April 20 at 9:45 a.m., "Mad Flanders."

Insightful Romanian proverbs

From page F1

insightful and full of meaning:

- An ass is best an ass, though laden with gold.
- An empty sack cannot stand upright.
- An idle person is the devil's residence.
- An accusation lost cannot be redeemed.
- Anger is a short madness.
- As soon as a man is born, he begins to die.

Contented mind

- A contented mind is a continual feast.
- A covetous man serves his riches, not the other way around.
- A fool believes everything.
- A fool's tongue is long enough to cut his own throat.
- A good Deed will not go to a drooping flower.
- A good friend is my counsel relation.
- A guilty conscience feels continual fear.
- Abundance, like want, ruins many.
- After your fling, watch out for the sting.
- Beauty without wisdom is like a flower in the mud.

Sinebata video and photo. . .

From page F1

and roles in the production should also be listed.

Photographs may likewise be entered. Each photographer may field up to 10 photos. There are no categories in the photography section. The entries may be in color or in black and white.

The minimum image size is five megapixels (equivalent to A4 size, if printed). Cell phones may be used.

Entries must be e-mailed to sinebata@yahoo.com, each one properly titled in any language of his/her choice. (If entrant uses a dialect or local language, he must provide an English translation.)

The top choices, to be declared on May 29 and 30 in Tacloban City, will be used in promotional video and media debuts to represent the Philippines.

Sinebata is a joint undertaking of the National Council for Children's Television, Department of Education, EDNIS, PIA, PDEA, University of the Philippines, Bayani Museum, West Visayas State University, Ateneo University of Legaspi, Goethe Institut, Robinsons Malls, Leyte Normal University, PNE East Visayas State University, Entrepreneurship, Columbia's, AsiaPAC and Pilar International.

Message of love and redemption

EXCLUSIVE

OPENS APRIL 18 AT GLORIETTA, GREENBELT 3 & TRINOMA CINEMAS

"...over-the-top royal intrigue and incest, violent literary backstabbing, frothing conspiracy... make for wild entertainment."
— CHARLES MCNULTY, BOSTON GLOBE

"a thoroughly entertaining load of eye candy with solid performances..."
— NEW YORK POST

Glorietta Greenbelt Trinoma

Street Smart

Randy Navarro

JESUS CHRIST sacrificed Himself for our sins—that is how much He loves us. His goodness is incomparable. He died on the cross to pay the price for the redemption of sinners.

St. John succinctly described God's message of love and redemption in one amazing phrase: "For God so loved the world that He gave us his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life!"

As Christ hung on the cross, He dying words were an expression of filial trust and a source of peace: "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit." From these words, Christians draw strength and comfort on their deathbeds, as Christ Himself found peace in the midst of overwhelming suffering. His enduring love brings unending hope for those who believe in Him. Belief of Happy Easter!

* * *

It is most fun to join our Sinsons Photo Safari from May to June, or take the Sinsons Heritage Photo Tour on May 5 and 19, and leave your photographs. Visit manilastreetphotography.com, or call 896-5288.

LOTUS POND

ft. Valencia and S. Romero

Insightful Romanian proverbs

PO FRIENDS modified upon these Romanian proverbs, which are typically about his

OPENS APRIL 25

Birthday salivation, periodic dreams and other boob-tube booboos

By Nestor U. Torre

SOME READERS have asked for "no appropriate Easter fic" of studies and shackles. Happy re obligo!

* * *

Host: What will you and your family do on Holy Week?

Guest: We will go to the beach for swimming—and, hang loose stories, hurting.

(—Same topic, Jugo style?)

* * *

Host: Inside them is your show, why don't you?

Guest: Oh, yes, please buy tickets to our show, Gold media sold out na.

(Oh, is ang ina lang kaya?)

* * *

Host: How that you're a dad, what has changed in your plans for the future?

Guest: Now, I'm more mature and responsible; I just want to help my son to be his best!

(Are you—sure?)

* * *

Host: How do you save money in this hard economy?

Guest: Mahilig akong maglakad by the way so hindi nako nag-aaplay ng mga pera-pigilan items.

(Wow, galing nito, ha?)

* * *

Host: Did you always want to be a host?

Guest: Siyempre naman, hast lang (teaching intonation)... ako, I always wish that Leonardo DiCaprio, you know, wins!

(—Ah, SO! and get another wrong shoulder!)

* * *

Host: How much do you love your girlfriend?

Guest: I'm head over hills in love with her!

(That much, huh?)

* * *

Host: How many stones do you have now?

Guest: We have a national-wide chain coverage now, and more other nationals!

(Abroad?)

* * *

Host: Tell us about your next shows.

Guest: It's something different, with a lot of comedy, for a change.

Host: Will you be doing comedy slapstick?

Guest: Yes, as a matter of fact!

(—As a matter of—what?)

'Game Change' premieres on HBO

TONIGHT AT 9, the acclaimed HBO Original Movie, "Game Change," offers a revealing behind-the-scenes look at John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign, with Ed Harris as McCain and Julianne Moore playing VP hot, Sarah Palin.

Written by Emmy-winning and directed by Jay Roach, the TCA Press Tour award-winning HBO Original Movie is eight years in the making. It also stars Woody Harrelson and was executive-produced by Tom Hanks.

Italianni's new Lunch Deluxe

Treat yo' s three-course meal at Italianni's and make lunchtime the highlight of your day. Start with something healthy to treat your palate, serve a hearty entree to satisfy your craving for a filling main dish, then cap it off with a delicious dessert. Visit www.italiannis.com.ph to know more about Italianni's and its different branches.

'Bayang' at the Shang

From April 18 to 24, Resorts World's "Bayang" will be screened exclusively at the Shang Cineplex. The film was selected for the Director's Fortnight section of the Cannes Film Festival, among other distinctions. Call 633-7301 loc 1101 or log on to www.shangrila-plaza.com.

'Titanic Mystery Solved'

"Titanic: Mystery Solved," premiering April 15 at 8 p.m. on History, tells the exclusive story of the most recent mission that unveiled astonishing pieces of wreckage and presented unexpected findings and definitive answers. No other anniversary show has the exclusive story of this unique expedition and its startling revelations.

Sun Shop Express opens in Pampanga

Sun Cellular has opened its latest Sun Shop Express at the Jumbo Juana Mall at Sindalan, San Fernando, Pampanga. It offers a wide range of postpaid, prepaid, broadband and international services, as well as customer service representatives to assist customers. Sun Cellular is a member of the SUN Group.

'Thelma'

Time Absence Pictures' drama production, "Thelma," has embarked on a major tour, been screened in the

MORE: Parangu Sarah Palin actor TV drama

MONTAGE

province and has gained numerous festivals. It stars Maja Salvador as a young girl blessed with an uncanny gift of speed that enables her to run against many obstacles and changes the course of her family's life. Dolan lead roles are played by Jerrbie Aquino and John Arcilla.

'Forbidden Broadway'

The off-Broadway smash hit, a hilarious spoof of Broadway's most beloved musicals, will be staged on April 13 at Dalisdisan Mezzanine Grill, 7838 Makati ave. Joel Trinidad directs a cast that includes Lord Reneses, Coco Bonifacio, GJ Martinez and Leonna Martinez.

'Inside the Titanic'

At 9:35 p.m. today Glitz Hero TV presents "Inside the Titanic," a big-budgeted documentary that weaves together

(LOOK P3)